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ABSTRACT

This report is the result of a two year study during which the author attempted to apply one-half-inch videotape (VTR) technology to facilitate communication as a means of promoting development processes within the community. In addition to the social action component, the author collected and analyzed field data to determine effectiveness of VTR as a tool for community development. The report comprises three major sections: Section One describes the VTR Risk Model, a theoretical model developed from the available field data, and operationally defines the various stages of the Risk Model and the factors drawn from the field data and influencing each stage. Section Two illustrates the process and rationale used to identify and develop a series of emergent hypotheses which ultimately led to th development of a comprehensive theory and the subsequent Risk Model. Finally Section Three describes a set of observed phenomena that both reinforce the emergent theory and supplement it with the proposal of a Force theory for VTR as a tool for social animation. Examples of the field data used in the study are presented in Appendix A. Appendixes B and C offer a case summary and proposed hypothesis. (Author/MW)

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THE SOCIAL ANIMATOR + VTR = COMMUNICATION??

A Communication Theory for Videotape
as an Instrument for
Community Development

R.M.K. Wagner

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Research and experimental programming in the field of continuing education are receiving increasing emphasis in the overall program of the Extension Division. It is the policy of the Division's Program Development Department to make the results of these activities widely available through the publication of monographs. This work is the first in an ongoing series of such publications.

Additional copies of "The Social Animator + VTR = Communication" are available from the Extension Division, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, at a cost of $3.00 per copy.

The Social Animator + VTR = Communication?!

A Communication Theory for Videotape
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R.M.K. Wagner

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PREFACE

This report is the result of the author's experience as a social animator in a south Saskatchewan community over a period of approximately two years — from September of 1970 to June of 1972. During the two years of residence, the author attempted to apply one-half-inch videotape (VTR) technology to facilitate communication as a means of promoting development processes within the community. In addition to the social action component, the author assumed responsibility for collecting field data which were to be analyzed to determine the effectiveness of VTR as a tool for community development.

The project, conceived and supported by Challenge for Change, was staffed and resourced by the University of Saskatchewan Extension Division in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. Other major contributions to the project by Challenge for Change were: an initiating grant; one-half-inch videotape facilities and maintenance; and an initial orientation program for the author.

The author wishes to acknowledge the assistance of G.M. Farrell, R.E. Brack, and D. Sharples for their various contributions throughout the project.

In particular, the author wishes to gratefully recognize the assistance received from G.M. Moss during the process of organizing and analyzing the voluminous data.

INTRODUCTION

Television — a twentieth-century phenomenon — has recently acquired a new significance because of the development of highly portable television cameras and recorders which the unskilled and the non-professional can quickly learn to operate. Today, a communications medium, which until lately has been restricted to the few, is available to the many.

People in North America, from all sectors of the social strata, are being confronted with half-inch videotape — currently referred to as VTR — and are responding in many different ways. Processes are continually emerging that involve the citizen preparing and documenting with the VTR medium his or her message for someone.

For some, communication has been facilitated by the simple use of this new medium as an "electronic ballpoint pen." For many others though, the experience has been a frustrating one. Indeed for many, much more harm has been inflicted by the medium than good accomplished.

Shortly after the data collection for this study commenced, it became apparent that videotape (VTR), when used as a tool for community development, inhibited communication as often as it served a facilitator role, and would continue to do so unless appropriate strategies were developed for its application.

The data for this study are qualitative in nature in that they were selected from voluminous daily field notes recorded by the author. The research objective was solely one of **theory generation** with regard to the effectiveness of VTR in the community development process.

Generally, the approach used here to generate theory is similar to that described by Glaser and Strauss. One difference is that the "theoretical saturation" referred to by Glaser and Strauss[1] did not occur as a deliberate effort to saturate formally developed concepts or categories. Rather, if theoretical saturation occurred, it was a result of continuous and intuitive categorization by the author in the process of the study; hence, informal selection and refinement of strategies occurred, which led to an optimum use of VTR in the community development process.

Formal analysis of the field data commenced after a planned "winding down" period and after the project had been completed.

The analysis was initiated by transcribing the following information from the field data to filing cards:

(1) instances where the use of VTR was proposed;

(2) the reactions of those individuals or subjects involved in the VTR proposals.

The use of file cards allowed the critical information to be easily sorted and re-sorted until common categories were developed which, in turn, through comparison procedures, led to the development of hypotheses and a subsequent theory.

The limitations of this study fall into the following four categories:

1. Subjective measurements, based on field-recorded observations, were dichotomized. All of the risk level and reference level factors isolated required some form of quantitative observations, even though their influence as variables was continuous in nature, ranging from a status of very low strength to highly active variables of very high strength. Therefore, the strength or degree of influence of each variable in a given situation was dichotomized and subjectively rated as either high or low on the continuum. Naturally, the same factor, rated as low in two different situations, may have actually been lower in one than in the other; hence, the dichotomized measurements of high and low may at first glance be somewhat misleading.
2. The very fact that subjective data were used to isolate the factors and determine the relationship between them makes it imperative that the study results be considered as a theory and a set of hypotheses that require further verification before the theory can be considered axiomatic.
3. In this study two dimensions of the model were deliberately ignored and assumed to be constant. Naturally, at the time of data collection, the author was unable to anticipate the model and theory to be eventually generated. Therefore, data were based on a record of observations which, as they occured, were considered to be significant. Hence, two portions of the model — (a) the value of potential gain, and (b) the subject's past experience — were ignored.

Certainly, in the future, if attempts are to be made to verify the theory proposed in this paper, both the value of potential gain and experience variables need to be quantified and included for verification.

4. Glaser and Strauss refer to "theoretical sampling" leading to "theoretical saturation" as an important step in the process of theory generation:

> Theoretical sampling is the process of data collection whereby the analyst jointly collects, codes, and analyzes his data and decides what data to collect next and where to find them in order to develop his theory as it emerges. This process of data collection is controlled by the emerging theory, whether substantive or formal.[2]

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[1] B.G. Glaser and A.L. Strauss, *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*, Aldine Publishing Co., Chicago, Ill., 1967, p. 45.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 45

Theoretical sampling for a particular category then continues until that category is "saturated":

> Saturation means that no additional data are being found whereby the sociologist can develop properties of the category. As he sees similar instances over and over again, the researcher becomes empirically confident that a category is saturated.[3]

Although in this study there was not a conscious attempt (in a formal way) to theoretically sample and saturate the emergent categories, there is no doubt that some form of theoretical saturation did occur in an informal fashion. As the process proceeded, intuitive testing did occur, resulting in biases favoring certain procedures or strategies over others. It must be recognized, though, that some elements of the theory are stronger than others owing to a difference in their degree of saturation.

The report comprises three major sections. The first section describes a theoretical model developed from the available field data. That model is referred to as the **VTR Risk Model**. The first section also operationally defines the various stages of the Risk Model and the factors drawn from the field data and influencing each stage. The second section illustrates the process and rationale used to identify and develop a series of emergent hypotheses which ultimately led to the development of a comprehensive theory and the subsequent Risk Model. Finally, the third section describes a set of observed phenomena that both reinforce the emergent theory and supplement it with the proposal of a Force theory for VTR as a tool for social animation.

Examples of the field data used in the study are located in Appendix A and expressed in a format designed to insure that the individuals and groups involved remain anonymous.

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[3] *Ibid.*, p. 61

CHAPTER I

THE RISK MODEL

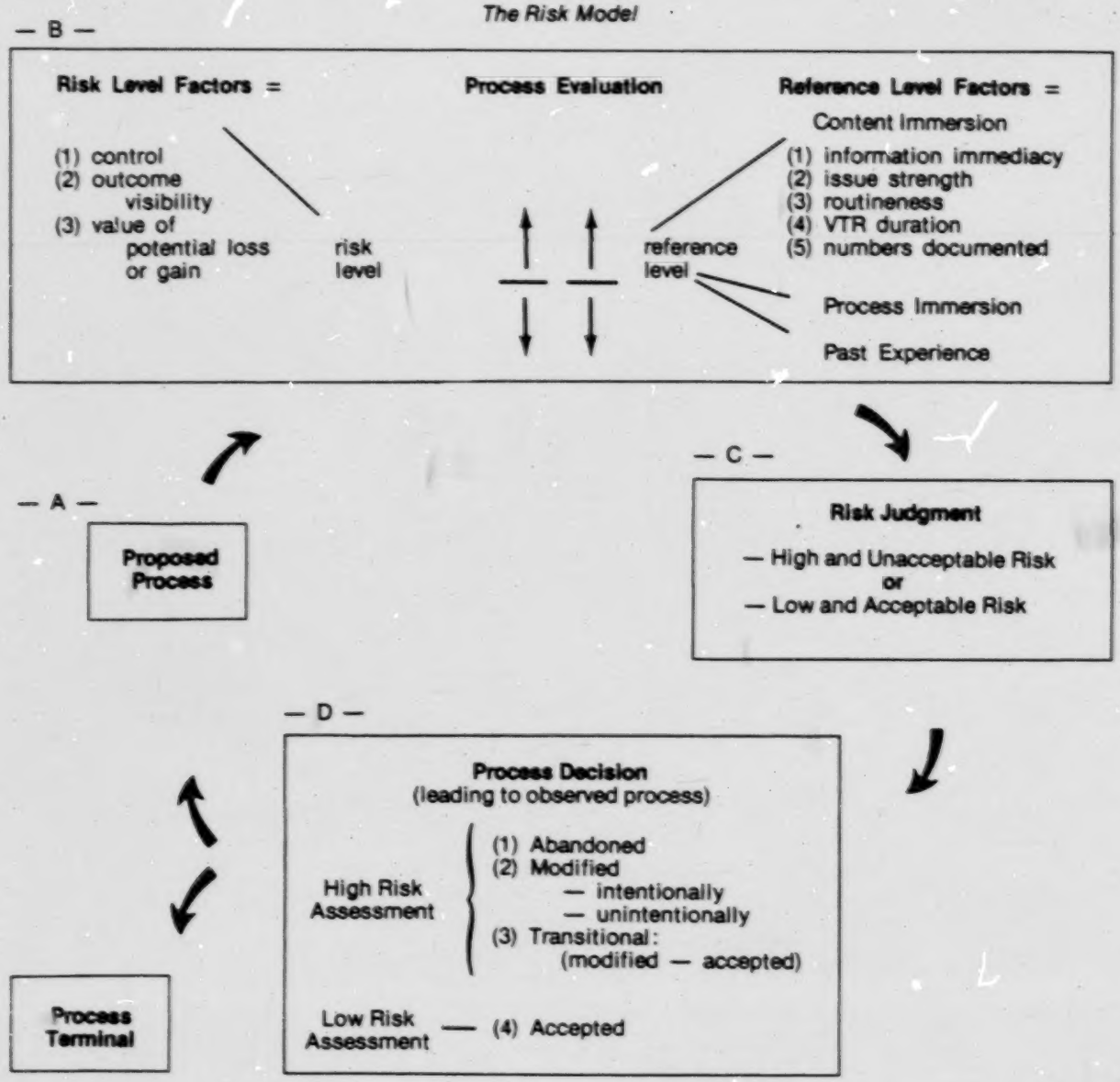
The Risk Model, diagrammed in Figure A, below, and used to articulate the theory generated in this study, is cyclical in nature and comprised of the following four stages: (A) the **Proposed Process**; (B) the **Process Evaluation**; (C) the **Risk Assessment**, and (D) the **Process Decision**.

THE PROPOSED PROCESS

The proposed process is that piece of proposed strategy which requires the involvement of one or more persons (subjects). For example, a proposed process would be the animator's suggestion that a group or an individual attempt to use VTR in a certain way to accomplish specific ends. Another example would be an individual's suggestion that he or she use VTR in a certain way to accomplish specific ends. A third example might be an individual's suggestion to his or her group that they use VTR in a particular way to accomplish specific objectives.

FIGURE A

The Risk Model



Whether the process originates from an external source or from the subject(s), the subject(s) must assess the proposal and decide whether or not it will be pursued.

If the decision is to follow up the proposed process, the subject(s) must then consider whether or not the proposed process should be altered and, if it should be changed, what form the modifications should take.

In this study, the proposed processes were limited to situations involving the use of half-inch videotape.

How the subject reacts to the proposed process will be determined by a variety of information elements contained in the proposal along with the subject's past experience. Hence, the proposed process is considered to be only the information in the proposal or suggestion, **as perceived by the subject(s)** receiving the information. The subject's consideration and analysis of the information in the proposed process is stage B in the Risk Model and is referred to as the **process evaluation** stage.

PROCESS EVALUATION

In the process evaluation stage, the subject first establishes a **reference level** or a frame of reference for determining whether the risk, perceived by the subject as accompanying the proposed process, is acceptable or not acceptable. Hence, the reference level is actually the most risk the subject can accept and still allow himself or herself to become involved in the process as it was originally perceived.

The model proposes that the process evaluation involves both a reference level and a risk level operating independently of each other. When the subject establishes his or her reference level and thus determines the maximum amount of risk that is acceptable, the subject then begins to estimate the perceived risk and establishes a risk level.

For example, in Figure B all three situations involve an acceptable amount of risk simply because the risk level perceived by the subject is lower than the reference level established by the subject.

FIGURE B

Acceptable Risk: Elevated Reference Level and/or Depressed Risk Level

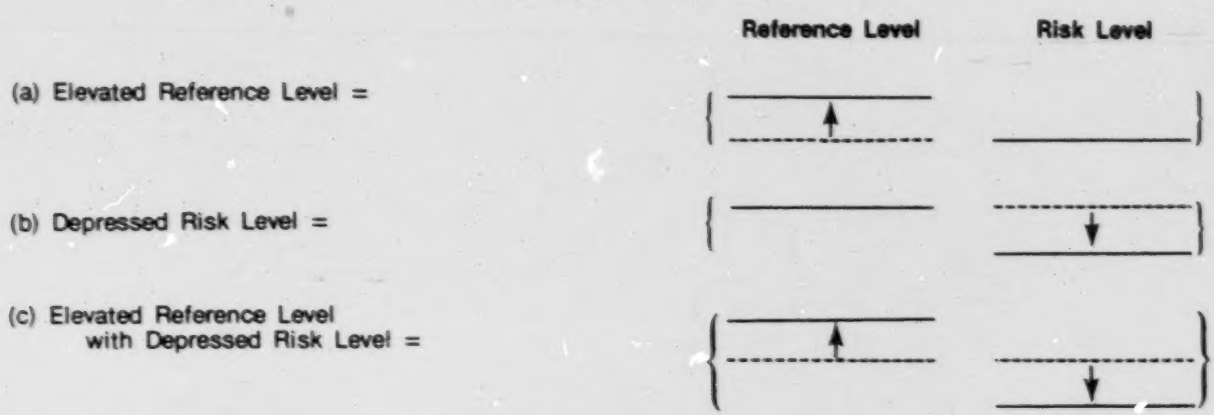
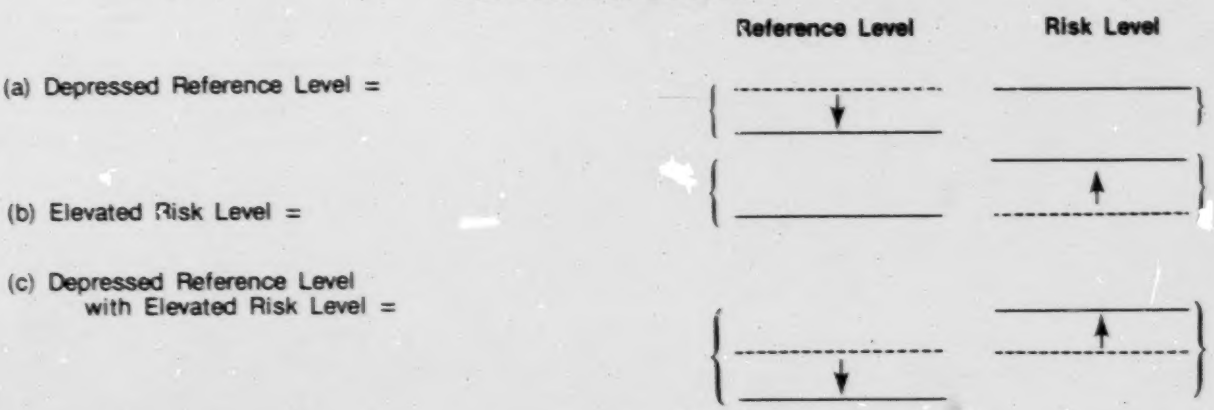

Reference Level
Risk Level
(a) Elevated Reference Level =
(b) Depressed Risk Level =
(c) Elevated Reference Level with Depressed Risk Level =

FIGURE C

Unacceptable Risk: Depressed Reference Level and/or Elevated Risk Level


Reference Level
Risk Level
(a) Depressed Reference Level =
(b) Elevated Risk Level =
(c) Depressed Reference Level with Elevated Risk Level =

Similarly, in Figure C all three situations involve an unacceptable amount of risk, because the risk level perceived by the subject is higher than the subject's reference level.

Whether the risk is acceptable or not will determine how the subject(s) will react to the proposed process. Hence it becomes imperative that the animator attempt to understand the forces affecting both the risk and the reference levels.

As illustrated in Figure A, this study has isolated a number of factors affecting both the risk level and the reference level, most of which can be effectively controlled by the prudent animator when he or she proposes a VTR process.

Risk Level Factors

The four variables identified as affecting the risk level directly or indirectly are: (a) **control** ; (b) **value of potential loss or gain** ; (c) **outcome visibility** ; and (d) **value of potential gain**. They are each operationally defined as follows:

(a) **Control** is defined as the degree to which the subject involved in a proposed process perceives his ability to affect the decision-making involved in the proposed process. Therefore, control depends upon the number of decisions the subject can make directly, the degree to which the subject perceives his ability to influence those making actual decisions, or the degree of trust the subject holds for those making decisions related to the proposed process.

Because at the time of data collection instruments were not available for measuring the precise degree of control through trust, and perceived ability to influence, specific situations were dichotomized as involving either low or high control. A high degree of control was assumed when the subject(s) had either the actual possession of the VTR equipment or a very close association with those in possession of the VTR equipment.

A low degree of control was assumed when the subject(s) did not have actual possession of the VTR equipment and appeared to be quite removed from those in possession of the VTR and those making the process decisions.

For example, a proposal where the subject(s) physically controlled both the VTR facilities and decisions was obviously rated as having a high degree of subject control. If a close friend of the subject(s) was to operate the VTR facilities, the situation would probably also be considered as a high degree of control situation. But such categorization would require observing additional elements of **trust** between the friend and the subject(s). The removal of such trust between the two would quickly turn the situation into one involving a low degree of control being perceived by the subject(s).

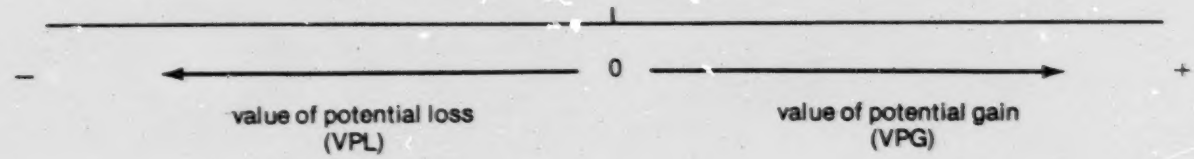
(b) **Value of Potential Loss or Gain** is defined as an estimate, by the subject(s) involved in the proposed process, of the value of what may be lost or gained by the subject(s) if the process continues as originally proposed.

Figure D illustrates the value of potential loss as a **negative** continuum ranging from a situation where the subject perceives that there is nothing or very little to be lost, to a situation where the subject perceives a substantial loss if the process continues as proposed. Value of potential gain is the **positive** side of the continuum ranging from a point where the subject perceives nothing to be gained, to a point where the subject perceives a great deal to be gained if the process continues as proposed.

Although the VPL and VPG factors are obviously related, the VPL factor was readily isolated and linked to observed behavioral phenomena, whereas the VPG factor was difficult to observe with the techniques used in this study. The difference and difficulties stem from the tendency of individuals to note and offer explanations for the rejection of proposals, whereas individuals generally do not offer reasons for accepting proposals as proposed. Therefore, except for recognizing its existence and possible effects, the value of potential gain (VPG) variable was largely ignored in this study, and the

FIGURE D

Loss-Gain Continuum



study subjectivity dictated that the observations be dichotomized as **high** or **low** value of potential loss (VPL) for analysis.

For example, in Case 3B[1], subjects (b) and (c) were considered as having a **low** value of potential loss. When the proposal was initiated, both the audience and the content of the documented discussion were well defined for the subjects, and the subjects readily accepted the proposal. The defined audience and content did not appear to stimulate any concern by the subjects for their potential loss.

On the other hand, the subject in Case 2 was considered to have a **high** value of potential loss. Although the subject demonstrated a substantial commitment to the concern expressed, the inferred relationship between his and other government departments, the issue, and the subject's role in the community, suggested that a high value of potential loss was perceived by the subject.

(c) **Outcome Visibility** is defined as the degree to which the subject involved in a proposed process can envision (i) the eventual outcome of the process proposed, and (ii) the precise process leading to that outcome.

The outcome visibility factor was also dichotomized as being **high** or **low** for purposes of qualitative analysis.

Subjects (b) and (c) in Case 3B[2] were categorized as having a **high** degree of outcome visibility incorporated in the proposed process. When the proposal was initially proposed, the subjects could precisely identify for whom the document would be screened, the context within which it would be screened, and the content proposed for the document. Thus the outcome and the process leading to the outcome were clear and definite to the subjects.

The subject in Case 2 was categorized as having a **low** degree of outcome visibility since the animator was unable to convey to the subject a precise and meaningful outcome nor did the animator adequately define a process leading to an eventual outcome. For example, the animator was unable to describe those who would screen the document, why they would screen it, and when it would be screened.

The three factors affecting the risk level — **control**, **outcome visibility**, and **value of potential loss** (VPL) **or gain** (VPG) — were isolated and their relationships determined. As illustrated in Figure E, the subject's perceived control over the proposed process directly affects the risk level in that **the less the perceived control over the proposed process, the greater or the higher the risk level**.

The VPL (value of potential loss) factor also directly affects the risk level in that **the greater the subject's perceived VPL, the greater or higher the risk level** involved in continuing the process as it was originally proposed. (Conversely, one might speculate that the greater the subject's perceived value of potential gain, the less or the lower the risk level.)

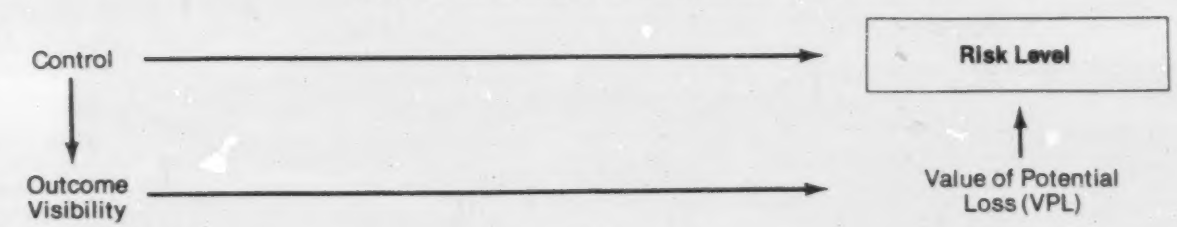
There is some evidence to support an indirect relationship between the outcome visibility factor and risk level through the VPL factor. For example, if there is a low degree of outcome visibility, that is, if the subject is unable to envision where the process will lead, then the subject tends automatically to assume the worst and estimates a high VPL (value of potential loss). Thus, a low degree of outcome visibility always leads to a high assessment of the VPL and hence a risk level perceived to be high.

On the other hand, a high degree of outcome visibility (although it may reveal a high value of potential loss) does not affect the VPL factor and therefore high outcome visibility does not directly affect the risk level.

It should be noted that there is evidence to suggest that the control factor affects the risk level indirectly as well as directly. As illustrated in Figure E, control influences outcome visibility in that when the degree of subject control is high, the outcome visibility factor ceases to be important and is virtually nonexistent. However, a low degree of subject control will activate the outcome visibility factor, and, as explained above, a low outcome

FIGURE E

The Relationship Between Risk Level Factors



[1,2] See Appendix A.

visibility factor will result in a high value of potential loss (VPL) and a high risk level.

Reference Level Factors

The subject's reference level is a frame of reference for making a decision as to what he or she should do with the process proposed. However, as illustrated in Figures A, B, and C, the frame of reference itself is as mobile as the risk level and a battery of factors that influence where the subject will establish the reference level have been isolated and described.

The reference level is, no doubt, influenced by the subject's **past experience** along with the set of **content** and **process immersion** variables isolated in this study. However, a limitation of this study was that the subjects' past experiences were not readily observable phenomena and at the time of the data collection instruments were not available for measuring the experiential component.

The **Content and Process Immersion** factors referred to in this study are: (a) **information immediacy**; (b) **issue strength**; (c) **degree of routineness**; (d) **VTR duration**; (e) **the numbers of subjects documented**; and (f) **VTR process immersion**. These are operationally defined as follows:

(a) **Information Immediacy**: the time interval between the presentation of information to the subject(s) and the subsequent VTR documentation of the reaction of the subject(s) to that information.

A high degree of information immediacy occurs in a situation when the subjects are reacting to recently available information; that is, when the time interval is brief between the presentation of information and the subsequent VTR documentation of the subjects' reaction to that information. For example, in Case 3C the members of the group were so immersed in the process of reacting to the videotape self-appraisal information that the VTR documentation facilities present were completely ignored. Case 11 is an example of information immediacy where the "content" documented with VTR was in fact the subjects' reactions to the information seminar immediately preceding the VTR documentation. In such cases, the subjects appeared able to become quickly immersed again with the original information as the content, regardless of the presence of videotape facilities.

(b) **Issue Strength**: the emotionally based motivation that a subject uses to direct himself or herself at resolving a specific issue or concern.

A high degree of issue strength occurs when the subject feels strongly about the issue, concern, or discussion topic. In such instances, the topic under discussion is a high priority one, often based on the subject's personal experiences. Hence, the subject tends to be emotionally involved in the topic and committed to the resolution of the issue or concern.

The subjects in Cases 1, 2, and 12 demonstrate a high degree of issue strength.

(c) **Routineness**: a process that occurs repeatedly, so that while in process the subject can anticipate the process and is not required to synthesize information or deal with the unexpected.

A high degree of routineness occurs in a situation where the activity in the proposed process is routine; that is, it would have occurred whether or not the process had been proposed or whether or not VTR was present. The press conference in Case 14B and the theater group's practice in Case 13 are examples of situations involving a high degree of routineness.

(d) **Duration of VTR Documentation**: the time required for videotape documentation in a specific situation resulting from a proposed process.

(e) **Number of Subjects Documented**: the number of subjects involved in a proposed process and in a given situation where VTR documentation is to occur.

(f) **VTR Process Immersion**: a situation where the subjects are involved in the process rather than in the content. It operates at a high degree when the subjects are, in fact, largely interacting with the medium itself — specifically with the hardware and technical dimensions of the VTR facilities. The subject's immersion into the gimmickry of the hardware or medium itself rather than the message is the sign of an active VTR process immersion factor.

It was observed that most of the subjects who had **not** been previously exposed to portable VTR facilities were quickly lured into becoming involved in the proposed process if it incorporated a potential for their exploration of the new medium. However, for most subjects, the process of medium demystification tended to occur rapidly, thus leaving the subjects in a better position to estimate the cost-benefit ratio of involving themselves in a proposed VTR process. The term "cost-benefit" as used here refers to the perceived difference between the input required by the process and the anticipated outcome of the process, in terms of time, energy, dollars and cents, and so on.

A synthesis of the study data suggests that **a strengthening of any of the five content immersion factors or the process immersion factor would tend to elevate the reference level** of the subject(s) as a frame of reference for estimating the degree of risk involved in accepting the process as proposed.

In summary, the **process of evaluation** (stage B in Figure A, page 4) involves:

1. The subject(s) establishing a reference level or frame of reference for assessing the degree of risk involved in accepting the process as proposed. Factors influencing where the subject will establish the reference level are:
   (a) the degree of information immediacy;
   (b) the degree of issue strength;
   (c) the degree of routineness;
   (d) the VTR duration;
   (e) the number of subjects documented;
   (f) the degree of VTR process immersion.
2. The subject(s) establishing a risk level, involving their perception of:
   (a) the degree of control;

(b) the degree of outcome visibility;
(c) the value of potential loss;
(d) the value of potential gain.

3. A comparison by the subject(s) of the perceived risk level **relative** to the reference level.

RISK JUDGMENT

Risk judgment is actually an expression of the outcome of the evaluation process in stage B in Figure A. As it is used in the model, risk judgment is a process of categorization, where the perceived risk incorporated in the proposed process is either too high and unacceptable or it is sufficiently low and acceptable to the subject(s).

For the perceived risk to be considered too high and unacceptable, the subject(s) must identify the risk level as being higher than the reference level (see Figure C, page 5). On the contrary, if the risk is considered to be sufficiently low to be acceptable to the subject, then the risk level is identified by the subject(s) as being lower than the reference level (see Figure B, page 5).

In this way then, stage C of the model results in the perceived risk being assessed as either sufficiently low or too high and thus either acceptable or unacceptable to the subject(s).

PROCESS DECISION

The final stage of the model is referred to as the process decision stage and results in the subject(s) deciding how to react to the proposed process. Hence, process decision results in a course of action for the subject(s) and observable behavior.

It should be noted that neither the evaluation stage nor the risk judgment stage in the cycle is an observable process; that is, the subject's comparison of the reference level with the risk level perceived in the proposed process is **not** an overt mechanism. In fact, it is not likely that most subjects are aware that the comparison and judgment processes are occurring prior to their decision to accept or reject the proposed process.

The process decision stage was observed by the author and along with information regarding the proposed process and knowledge of some of the subject's history served as the data for the theory generated in this study.

Depending upon the outcome of the risk judgment in stage C of the model, the process decisions made by the subjects were divided into four categories: abandoned process; modified process, intentional and unintentional; transitional process; accepted process.

The Proposed Process Was Completely Abandoned

Observation: In numerous situations, a process was proposed to the subject (s) and then completely abandoned by the subject(s) before it could be initiated.

Explanation: The subject(s) estimated the perceived risk level, compared it with the reference level and decided that the risk level was higher than the reference level. Thus, the risk perceived by the subject(s) as incorporated into the proposed process was entirely unacceptable and too high to permit involvement in the process (see Figure C, page 5).

Examples of situations where proposed processes were abandoned are illustrated in Cases 2, 4, and 6 (see Appendix A).

The Proposed Process Was Modified

Observation: A process was proposed to the subject(s) and the subject(s) expressed an interest and willingness to participate in the proposed process. However, before the process was initiated and carried out, it was modified by the subject(s).

Explanation: The subject(s) determined that the risk level was greater than the reference level and thus unacceptable (see Figure C). Therefore, the subject(s) proceeded to modify the process to attempt to reduce the perceived risk level in the original proposed process.

Examples of situations where processes have been modified can be divided into two categories: (i) intentional, and (ii) unintentional.

(i) **Intentional Process Modification:** In such situations, the time difference between process proposal and process implementation was sufficient to allow the subject to **intentionally** develop a strategy to alter the proposed process and reduce the risk. To observe the intentional process modification, one must be able to identify the original proposed process and then compare it with the process as it occurs.

Examples of situations where proposed processes were modified **intentionally** are illustrated in Cases 5C, 7B, and 8 (see Appendix A).

(ii) **Unintentional Process Modification:** In such situations, the time difference between process proposal and process implementation was minute and the subject(s) was coerced into attempting to deal with the "proposed process" immediately. Therefore, the attempt at participation modified the proposed process with the process being characterized by the projection of signs of anxiety, defence mechanisms, and tension. In such cases, process modification was readily observable, usually as a result of the overt behavior of the subject(s).

Examples of situations where proposed processes were modified **unintentionally** are illustrated in Cases 1, 3B(b) and 3B(c) (see Appendix A).

A Transition Occurred from an Unintentionally Modified Process to a Process that Occurred as it Was Originally Proposed:

Observation: The subject(s) modified the proposed process unintentionally; however, within a given situation the process changed from an **unintentionally modified process to the process as it was originally proposed.**

Explanation: The subject(s) established that the risk level was greater than the reference level (see Figure C, page 5) and therefore too high to be

acceptable. Therefore, the subject(s) proceeded to modify the original process. In all transitional cases observed in this study, processes were unintentionally modified. Probably because social norms dictate the unacceptability of this type of behavior (unintentional modification), along with the influence of one or more reference level factors, such as the duration of VTR documentation factor, the subject(s) **elevates the reference level,** as illustrated in Figure B, page 5. In this way, the risk judgment can be further reduced so that the risk is judged acceptable to the subject(s) and the process continues as originally proposed.

Examples of situations where a transition occurred in the behavior of the subject(s) are illustrated in Cases 3B(a), 5A, and 16B (see Appendix A).

The Process Is Accepted as Proposed:

Observation: In many situations the proposed process was accepted by the subjects and continued as it was originally proposed.

Explanation: The subject(s) determined that the perceived risk level **was less than** the reference level and therefore low enough to be acceptable. In many instances, the risk is considered acceptable simply because of an elevated reference level (see Figure B, page 5) influenced by the isolated reference level factors.

Examples of situations where proposed processes were accepted and continued as originally proposed are illustrated in Cases 9, 10A, 11, 12, and 13 (see Appendix A).

Summary:

The **process decision** portion of the model is that portion when the subject(s) makes a decision as to what will happen to the originally proposed process. This study has developed four categories of process decisions:

(a) **High Risk Judgment:** when the proposed process is unacceptable and abandoned completely.

(b) **High Risk Judgment:** when the proposed process is initially unacceptable and is modified either intentionally or unintentionally.

(c) **High Risk Judgment:** when the proposed process is initially unacceptable and a transition occurs from a modified process to the process as proposed as the subject adjusts to accept more risk because of an elevated reference level.

(d) **Low Risk Judgment:** when the process is accepted and continues as it was originally proposed.

If the risk perceived by the subject(s) is considered to be unacceptable but the process is not abandoned completely, then the process is modified by the subject(s) in such a way as to reduce the risk to an acceptable level. After each attempt to modify the process, the subject(s) evaluates the modified process and recycling occurs through the model until the process is either completely abandoned or accepted.

Therefore, the RISK MODEL represents a decision-making model or cycle where the subject(s) in the proposed process stage (stage A) is presented with information and asked to make a decision. The subject(s) then evaluates (stage B) the information to judge the level of risk (stage C) involved and decides if the level of risk is low enough to be acceptable. Whether or not the risk is acceptable, will influence the decision (stage D) and subsequent overt behavior of the subject(s).

CHAPTER II

DEVELOPMENT OF THE RISK MODEL

ASSUMPTIONS

To integrate the hypotheses and theory developed in this study, a model of the decision-making process was assumed (see Figure F).

Furthermore, this study assumed that stage B, the process evaluation stage, involved a risk level established by the subject(s) and based on information contained in stage A, the proposed process. The process evaluation stage also involved the subject(s) establishing a reference level to be used to assess the risk level and its degree of acceptability. It was assumed that the reference level was also dependent upon information contained in the proposed process. Hence, it was assumed that the risk and reference levels were established independently and were independently elevated or depressed.

THE PROPOSED PROCESS VERSUS OBSERVED PHENOMENA

In the early 1970s the VTR phenomenon of highly portable and inexpensive videotape facilities had its initial and spectacular success as a tool for community development. At that time it was assumed that a change agent or social animator, by simply applying VTR, would inevitably facilitate communication processes between individuals, and between and within groups and communities.

However, it is now obvious that the animator must cope with the total effects of the VTR instrument and become just as sensitive to the inhibiting effects of VTR and the observable indicators as he or she is to the facilitating effects of VTR.

For the purposes of this study, situations defined as involving some **communication inhibition** were those situations where one of the following observations was made:

1. the proposed process was abandoned;
2. the process was modified intentionally;
3. the process was modified unintentionally.

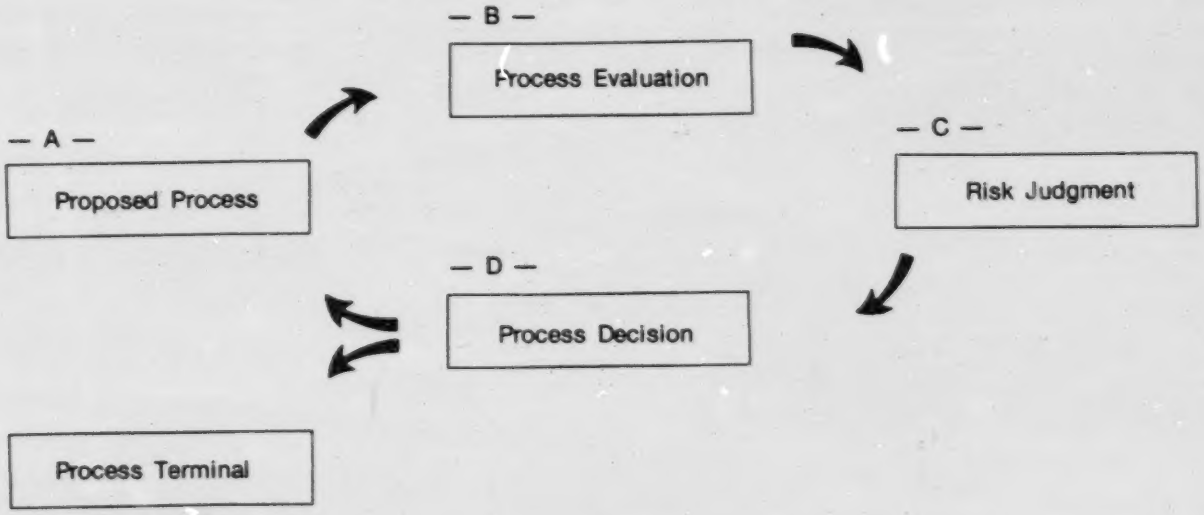
In situations where a transition was observed from a "modified process" to the process as it was originally proposed, communication was initially inhibited but eventually occurred normally. Situations defined as involving **normal communication** were those when the process was accepted by the subjects(s) and followed through as originally proposed.

Therefore, to analyze the field data, information contained in the proposal was compared with the author's perceptions of "what really did occur" and how the subject(s) perceived the proposed process.

During the analysis, situations involving communication inhibition were also regarded as having been assessed by the subject(s) as **high risk** situations and thus unacceptable. On the other hand, situations involving normal communication

FIGURE F

The Risk Model — As a Decision-Making Process



were regarded as **low risk** situations and acceptable to the subject.

Therefore, the four categories of observations, and their relationship to the subject's risk judgment of a proposed process, can be stated in hypothesis form:

1. If a proposed process is abandoned, it is due to a high risk judgment.
2. If a proposed process is modified intentionally or unintentionally, it is due to a high risk judgment.
3. If a proposed process changes within a given situation from an unintentionally modified process to the process as it was originally proposed, it is due to a reduction of risk assessment, from a high risk judgment to a low risk judgment.
4. If a proposed process is accepted as proposed, it is due to a low risk judgment.

PROCESS EVALUATION

The assumption, made early in this study, that the risk level and the reference level were both established by the subject but were independent of each other suggests that a most important task is to isolate factors that influence the fixation of both the risk and the reference levels. Such factors can only be brought into the process at two points: (1) the proposed process and the accompanying information; and (2) the subject's past experience and his or her value system.

Because instruments were not employed to gather information on the subject(s), specific factors relating to the past experience and the value system of the subject(s) were largely ignored for the time being. However, it was felt that subjective data gathered through situational observations were sufficient to isolate many of the factors contained in the proposal information. These are the factors and conditions best controlled by a social animator involved in the processes and thus, perhaps, the most significant factors.

Because of the assumption that the risk and the reference levels are established independently, the factors influencing the two levels were examined separately.

Risk Level Factors

The study data yielded three factors that might influence the establishment of the risk level. Those factors are referred to here as: (a) **control**; (b) **value of potential loss or gain**; and (c) **outcome visibility**.

(a) *CONTROL*

Observation (A):

Case 3B[1]

Subject (b):

Subject (b) agreed to the VTR documentation but remained highly anxious throughout the interview. The subject appeared to know very little about the organization in question and was unable to respond to the animator's information and questioning. After ten to fifteen minutes of attempted discussion, the interview was stopped.

After reviewing the tape, the subject appeared unhappy with the document but, upon request, consented to its use if the worker considered it useful. The VTR documentation occurred in the subject's home.

Subject (c):

Subject (c) was videotaped in the worker's home and the response was identical to that of subject (b). As in subject (b)'s case, subject (c) had very little information or knowledge about the organization in question and was unable to respond adequately to the worker's information and questions. The interview duration was approximately eight minutes and the subject agreed to the use of the entire document if the worker considered it useful.

SUMMARY OF OBSERVATION (A):
— Process is unintentionally modified
— Therefore, High Risk Judgment

Case	Control	Outcome Visibility	VPL	Information Immediacy	Issue Strength	Routineness
3B (b)	Low	High	Low	Low	Low	Low
3B (c)	Low	High	Low	Low	Low	Low

In Case 3B, subject (b) and subject (c) were both observed to **modify the process unintentionally**, thus indicating a **high and unacceptable** risk judgment — hence, communication inhibition.

Because the proposed VTR process was initiated and implemented by the animator, the subjects were categorized as perceiving **minimal subject control** of the process. The degree of outcome visibility was high because the subjects were informed as to precisely what was to be done with the document and who was to screen it. It was apparent that the only loss perceived by the subjects was perhaps the threat of a social or ego loss when their inability to respond to the interview questions would be discovered by those screening the document.

None of the reference level factors appeared to be in operation; hence a low reference level was assumed.

[1] See Appendix A for all Cases used.

Observation (B):

Case 9

A group of young people, ages 11 to 13, ware interested in producing a VTR document describing their immediate cultural environment and their relationship to it. Later they were to share their VTR document (along with others using different media) with friends and relatives. The proposed process inciuded the offer to provide the subjects with instruction in the operation of the VTR facilities and to encourage them to take the VTR and produce their own document. The originally proposed process left the animator responsible only for offering technical assistance in terms of the mechanical aspect of the editing procedure.

The proposal was accepted as proposed and a document was produced by the subjects which in turn was screened for their friends and relatives in the community as originally proposed.

The VTR document included the subjects themselves displaying very little, if any, inhibition in front of the camera and it illustrated the subjects in their daily routine. During the community screening, the subjects displayed a great deal of pride and confidence in operating the VTR playback. The role of the community development worker was very "low key." The audience response to the screening was overwhelmingly positive and reinforcing for the subjects.

Case 10 (A and B)

A.

The subject contracted with the community development worker to produce a VTR document describing a specific sector of the community institution he represented. The document was then to be reviewed by a group of elected non-professional policy-makers for the institution, as a source of policy feedback.

It was agreed that the worker would do some of the camera work and the mechanical editing. However, the subject assumed responsibility for all editing decisions and for decisions as to what information was to be documented and how it was to be documented.

During the process, it was agreed that the subject would provide an introduction on VTR. The animator operated the camera and interviewed the subject. The subject was able to respond to the animator very effectively and with very little projected anxiety. Hence, the communication did not appear to be inhibited and the process appeared to proceed as mutually agreed upon by the worker and the subject.

B.

Before screening the VTR document for the policy-makers, the subject's supervisor requested a private screening after which the supervisor insisted that the subject's VTR introduction be altered before the final screening. Hence, the process was deliberately modified by an external agent (the supervisor) who perceived the process of screening the subject's introductory statements for the policy-makers as a risk too high for him to accept.

SUMMARY OF OBSERVATION (B):
— Process is accepted as proposed
— Therefore, Low Risk Judgment

Case	Control	Outcome Visibility	VPL	Information Immediacy	Issue Strength	Routineness
9	High	Nil	Low	Low	Low	Low
10A	High	Nil	Low	Low	Low*	Low

* Moderately active

In Case 9 and Case 10A, the process was observed to **proceed as it was originally proposed**, thus indicating a low risk judgment and normal communication.

Both Cases involved direct control of the VTR and the proposed process by the subjects with what appeared to be a low value of perceived loss. Because the subjects' **control** over the process was considered to be at a **high level**, the outcome visibility factor was insignificant. If the subjects have control over the process, then the process or outcome visibility is no longer important to the subject.

Although there was some reference level activity in Cases 9 and 10A, (one was barely active in Case 10A), the reference level was still assumed to be fairly low, although perhaps not as low as in Case 3B, subjects (b) and (c).

Conclusion:

After comparing Observation (A) and Observation (B), the only variable to change significantly as the risk judgment changed, was the **control** factor for risk level.

Therefore, it is hypothesized that:

> Control is inversely proportional to the risk level perceived by the subject.

(b) *VALUE OF POTENTIAL LOSS*

Observation (A):

Case 9 and Case 10A

(See Observation (B), above, i.e., "Control" Observation for a detailed description.)

SUMMARY OF OBSERVATION (A):
— Process is accepted as proposed
— Therefore, Low Risk Judgment

Case	Control	Outcome Visibility	VPL	Information Immediacy	Issue Strength	Routineness
9	High	Nil	Low	Low	Low	Low
10A	High	Nil	Low	Low	Low*	Low

* Moderate strength or activity

In Case 9 and Case 10A, the **process was observed to occur as proposed** thus indicating a **low** risk judgment and normal communication.

Both Cases were observed to involve a high degree of control, with a **low value of potential loss**. The reference level was also considered to be low and static for Case 9 although somewhat more active in Case 10A.

Observation (B):

Case 7B

However, some time later, before the process was to commence, the process as proposed was abandoned. In its place, a modified process was substituted and the modified process involved only a limited portion of the agency.

The new and modified proposal, mutually agreed to, was to have the animator videotape two of the subjects working with their clientele. Later the two subjects were to review the document and it was to serve as a form of evaluation for the subjects to use for technique improvement. However, after the proposal had been accepted, it was decided by the agency to show the documents to the rest of the agency staff as a form of professional staff development. Thus a new dimension of external appraisal was introduced. In other words, the VTR would have the effect of taking the rest of the agency, including the supervisors, as observers into the subject-clientele session.

The process initially proceeded as proposed, but it soon became evident that the subjects had **intentionally modified** the process to "put on a show" for the VTR and hence the external evaluators.

Techniques used by the subjects were designed to keep the clientele busy discussing superficial and relatively meaningless topics. Thus, the pressure of responding spontaneously was removed from the subjects, and the probability of the discussion being intensively directed at the subjects, was markedly reduced.

However, the original task or proposed process involved the facilitation (by the subjects) of in-depth personal communication within the clientele groups. This presupposes trust development within the group and between the group and the subjects. However, because of the proposal modification, trust development between the group and the subjects did not occur as it should have. Trust development would have involved encouraging subject spontaneity and perhaps subsequent pressure for subject self-disclosure and hence a high risk situation for the subjects since such spontaneity and disclosure were to be shared with external evaluators. (Agency staff and supervisors.)

Case 5B

The school trustee was pleased with the VTR document and invited the subject to screen the document for the board of trustees. However, because of the subject's concern over the defensive reaction by the graduate class, the subject deliberately modified the proposal by suggesting that it first be shown to the senior educational administrators in the community and perhaps after the initial screening it could be shown to the trustees. Thus it was decided to screen the tape for a group comprised of the administrators, the community development worker, the participant trustee in the original document, and the subject.

SUMMARY OF OBSERVATION (B):
— Process was intentionally modified
— Therefore, a High Risk Judgment

Case	Control	Outcome Visibility	VPL	Information Immediacy	Issue Strength	Routineness
7B	High	Nil	High	Low	Low	Low
5B	High	Nil	High	Low	High	Low

In Cases 7B and 5B, the subjects were observed to **intentionally modify** the proposed process and thus to judge the situation as a **high risk** situation. Thus, communication was considered inhibited.

Although the subjects in Case 7B themselves did not handle the VTR, they were involved with their agency in developing the original process and the original process was established in such a way as to encourage the subjects to assume control of the situation and the process. The fact that the process was **intentionally** modified indicates a relatively high degree of process control by the subjects.

On the other hand, the subjects in Case 7B set up a process involving an external appraisal situation; that is, expectations were established that the process documented with VTR would be screened by the agency supervisors. Hence the value of potential loss was perceived as being high and active.

The subject in Case 5B did have a high level of control, but also perceived a high value of potential loss in the proposed process involving screening the document for the school board.

The reference level was considered to be low for Case 7B but somewhat more active for Case 5B.

Conclusion:

After comparing Observation (A) and Observation (B), the only variable to change significantly as the risk judgment changed was the **value of potential loss** factor.

Therefore, it is hypothesized that:

> The value of potential loss is directly proportional to the risk level perceived by the subject.

(c) *OUTCOME VISIBILITY*

(1) *Relationship Between Outcome Visibility and Risk Level*

Observation (A):

Case 1

During a preliminary discussion with the subject, the subject emphasized his feelings of discontent and dislike for the general community and expressed his feeling that the community was not a friendly one. The subject was particularly concerned that professional educators dominated the community social structure.

During the discussion, the subject bitterly expressed his feelings that the community had unjustly alienated the industry which he represented as a professional and which had been located in the community for a number of years.

Two months later, during another casual meeting with the animator, the subject was introduced to VTR for the first time. The animator directed the camera at the subject and posed questions in such a way as to coerce the subject into attempting to discuss his feelings as he had expressed them in the earlier meeting with regard to the community.

Upon questioning, the subject was well aware of the response the animator expected (due to the sharing of information at the earlier meeting), but the subject was highly anxious and had a great deal of trouble expressing himself before the VTR. After viewing the replay, he described the experience as one of being confronted with a "one-eye, cold, icy, stare" and he described his feelings of "isolation and unfamiliarity" with the worker during the documentation process.

Case 2

During a discussion with an individual (a provincial civil servant) the subject articulated a concern for the quality of education in the community and in the province as a whole. The subject was concerned with the multitude of serious rifts that existed between the different educational roles: parent-student-teacher-taxpayer-provincial government-community as a whole, etc. He was concerned that the community had lost control to the provincial government of too many educational decisions as a result of a movement towards centralization of political decision-making.

Several days later, the subject was again contacted and the worker proposed VTR documentation of his feelings vis-à-vis the educational decision-making; however, the subject initially refused to be documented. The worker was undecided as to how such a document could be used to help resolve the concern expressed. Therefore, the subject was told that his information might be edited into a package with information from others expressing similar concerns and then screened for specific audiences. The animator assured the subject that he would be consulted prior to such screenings and have the right to edit his comments or refuse to have them screened.

After considerable prompting and persuasion from the worker, the subject finally consented to reconsidering the matter, but assured the worker that if he did participate, it would be with a great deal of caution and that he was not prepared to express himself as strongly as he had earlier.

Hence, the VTR documentation did not take place and the process was generally considered abandoned.

SUMMARY OF OBSERVATION (A):
— Process was unintentionally modified
— Therefore, a High Risk Judgment

Case	Control	Outcome Visibility	VPL	Information Immediacy	Issue Strength	Routineness
1	Low	Low	High	Low	High	Low
2	Low	Low	High	Low	High	Low

In Case 1 the subject was observed to have **unintentionally modified** the proposed process and in Case 2, the subject attempted to **intentionally modify** the process although eventually it was completely abandoned. At any rate, in both Cases 1 and 2, the subject judged the risk as **high and unacceptable**, thus resulting in communication inhibition.

Both subjects in Cases 1 and 2 were assessed as having a low level of control and a high value of potential loss. Neither subject had control of the proposed process and both expressed some concern about the potential loss related to their employment. In both instances, the degree of outcome visibility was considered to be **low** since where the tape would be screened and with whom it would be shared were not defined in the proposed process.

In both instances, the reference level was considered to be relatively high.

Observation (B):

Case 5C

The administrators acted extremely defensively to the VTR document and expressed some concern that the document was "biased against them" and their perspective was not expressed. The worker suggested that the tape be shown to a representative group of students, teachers, taxpayers, and educational administrators from the community and that their reaction be taped and included in the final document to be shown publicly.

Cases 8A and B

A community development seminar was videotaped by a group of students from the community. During the seminar, a core committee of representatives was elected to insure that the process initiated during the seminar was able to continue. One of the committee's immediate objectives was to edit the seminar videotapes to produce a document useful for diffusing information throughout the larger community with

regard to concerns expressed at the seminar. Hence, a subcommittee of two, from the core committee, assumed responsibility for editing the videotape.

After making all of the editing decisions on paper, the two subjects responsible for editing prepared an edited audiotape to enable them to receive community feedback regarding their final product. The first individual to review the audiotape and hence the decisions made, was a close relative (subject X) of one of the subjects responsible for editing. Subject X reacted intensely to a specific section of the tape criticizing a certain sector of his community upon which subject X was dependent for his livelihood. Therefore, vested interests propelled subject X into attempting to deliberately modify the process and influence the editing decisions.

Even though some others in the community did not share the concern of subject X, that portion of the VTR document of concern to subject X was discarded. Thus, subject X intentionally modified the process to reduce personal risk.

SUMMARY OF OBSERVATION (B):
— Process intentionally modified
— Therefore, a High Risk Judgment

Case	Control	Outcome Visibility	VPL	Information Immediacy	Issue Strength	Routineness
5c	Low	High	High	High	High	Low
8	Low	High	High	High	Low	Low

In Case 5C and Case 8, the subjects were observed to have **intentionally modified** the process as it was originally proposed, indicating a **high** risk assessment and communication inhibition.

Both subjects in both Cases, the administrators in Case 5C and subject X in Case 8B, perceived very little control over the proposed process and a high value of potential loss. However, both subjects were confronted with proposals involving a high degree of outcome visibility.

In both Cases, the reference level was regarded as being at a high level.

Conclusion:

Although the degree of outcome visibility was greater in Observation (B) than in Observation (A), the subjects' risk judgment of the proposed process remained the same for both sets of Observations as did the other risk level and reference level factors.

Therefore, it is hypothesized that:

> Outcome visibility **does not** directly affect the risk level.

(2) Relationship Between Outcome Visibility and the Value of Potential Loss

Observation (A):

Case 3B, subject (b) and Case 3B, subject (c)

(See Observation A, page 12)

SUMMARY OF OBSERVATION (A):
— The Process was unintentionally modified
— Therefore, a High Risk Judgment

Case	Control	Outcome Visibility	VPL	Information Immediacy	Issue Strength	Routineness
3B (b)	Low	High	Low	Low	Low	Low
3B (c)	Low	High	Low	Low	Low	Low

As indicated earlier, subject (b) and subject (c) from Case 3B **unintentionally modified** the proposed process and perceived the proposal with a **high** risk judgment, indicating communication inhibition.

Both subjects were considered to have a low degree of control, and a low value of potential loss. However, the outcome visibility was rated as high for both subjects.

The reference level for each subject was considered to be low.

Observation (B):

Case 5C and Case 8

(See Observation B, page 15)

SUMMARY OF OBSERVATION (B):
— The process was intentionally modified
— Therefore, a High Risk Judgment

Case	Control	Outcome Visibility	VPL	Information Immediacy	Issue Strength	Routineness
5C	Low	High	High	High	High	Low
8	Low	High	High	High	Low	Low

Again, using Case 5C and Case 8 as example Observations, it was observed that both subjects **intentionally modified** the process.

Whereas the degree of control was low, the degree of outcome visibility and the value of potential loss were both rated as being high. Also, the reference level for both of the above subjects was elevated and considered to be at a high level.

Conclusion:

Therefore, a proposed process with a high degree of outcome visibility can indeed be accompanied by either a high or a low value of potential loss.

Observation (C):

From the field data, no examples were found of situations where both a low degree of outcome visibility and a low value of potential loss were found.

Therefore, it is hypothesized that:

> Whereas a high level of outcome visibility can be accompanied by **either** a low or a high value of potential loss, **when the outcome visibility is at a low level the value of potential loss is always high**.

If the above hypothesis holds true, then the following explanation hypotheses may be generated:

(i) The degree of outcome visibility is **directly proportional** to the subject's ability to accurately estimate the value of the potential loss;
(ii) the subject's ability to estimate the value of potential loss is **inversely proportional** to the subject's tendency to speculate on the alternative outcomes;
(iii) the subject's tendency to speculate on the alternative outcomes is **directly proportional** to the subject's tendency to consider only the greatest possible value of potential loss.

(3) *Relationship Between Outcome Visibility and Control*

As a result of the operational definition of "control," (see page 6) this study has assumed that **when control is high, the outcome visibility is not significant.** Therefore, it is hypothesized that:

> Control is **inversely proportional** to the subject's consideration of the outcome visibility factor.

(d) Summary

The relationship between control, outcome visibility, and value of potential loss can best be described in terms of the illustration in Figure G.

The five hypotheses generated by the study and put forward in this portion of the report further define hypothetical relationships between the three risk level factors or variables.

Hypothesis #1: Control is inversely proportional to the risk level.

Hypothesis #2: The value of potential loss (VPL) is directly proportional to the risk level; and conversely the value of potential gain (VPG) is inversely proportional to the risk level.

Hypothesis #3: Outcome visibility does not directly affect risk level.

Hypothesis #4: When outcome visibility is low, the value of potential loss is always high.

Hypothesis #5: Control is inversely proportional to the subject's consideration of outcome visibility.

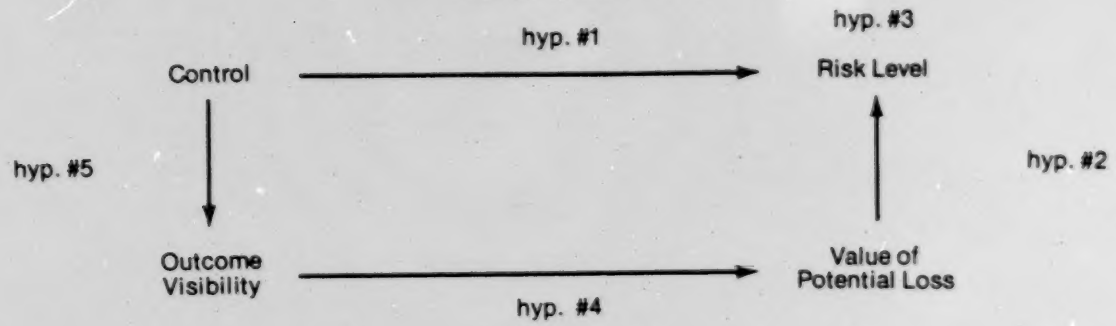
Reference Level Factors

This study yielded six factors that appear to influence where the subject establishes his or her reference level to allow for judgment of the risk involved in a proposed process. Five of the factors are referred to here as "content immersion" factors in that they can be manipulated to facilitate the subject's immersion into the content involved in a proposed process. The five content immersion factors affecting the reference level are: (a) **information immediacy**; (b) **issue strength**; (c) **routineness**; (d) **the duration of the VTR documentation**, and (e) **the number of subjects documented.**

The sixth factor, (f), influencing the reference level is referred to as the **VTR process immersion** factor and is active when subjects accept a proposed process simply because of the gimmickry surrounding the process -- specifically, the VTR itself.

FIGURE G

Hypotheses Indicating the Relationship Between Risk Level Factors



A seventh factor recognized as influencing the subject's reference level is the subject's **past experience**. However, the design of this study did not allow for sufficient data collection to describe the relationship of the past experience factor to the subject's risk judgment and the communication process.

The analysis procedure for three of the reference level factors — information immediacy, issue strength, and routineness — was identical to the procedure applied to the three risk level factors.

(a) *INFORMATION IMMEDIACY*

Observation A:

Case 3C

After the subjects had been documented, the worker assumed responsibility for some editing, which resulted in a half-hour tape. At the meeting with the organization in question, the worker explained his role in the community and described the procedures used for preparing the VTR document (Section A), and screened the VTR document for the executive of the organization.

Case 11 (A and B)

A.

An information seminar, sponsored by the University Extension Division, was held in the community and the community development worker was present to document portions of the seminar on videotape.

During the latter stages of the seminar, the worker and a seminar participant proceeded to attempt to interview other participants as a form of seminar evaluation. The objective was to document their feelings with respect to the effectiveness of the seminar in meeting their needs and expectations.

Several individuals were interviewed separately and although they responded initially with varying degrees of anxiety, inevitably the anxiety quickly disappeared as they became immersed in the seminar content. As the questions of the interviewer drew them into the seminar content, the participants were able to coherently articulate their feelings with respect to the seminar content and its suitability for them as individuals.

B.

It was noted that one subject refused to be interviewed as an individual; however, a few minutes later a group was documented discussing the seminar effectiveness and that individual was a part of the group documented. After several minutes of group discussion and VTR documentation, the subject began to ignore the VTR and proceeded to contribute extensively to the group discussion, both in terms of reinforcement and new insights.

SUMMARY OF OBSERVATION (A):
— Process occurred as proposed
— Therefore, a Low Risk Judgment

Case	Control	Outcome Visibility	VPL	Information Immediacy	Issue Strength	Routineness
3C	Low	High	Low	High	Low	Low
11	Low	Low	High	High	Low	Low

Both Case 3C and Case 11 had a relatively high level of risk since both had a **low** level of subject control. Although the value of potential loss for Case 3C is low, the value of potential loss for Case 11 was considered high because of a low degree of outcome visibility.[2] Therefore both Cases were considered as having high risk levels.

Since both events were separate and unique incidents the level of routineness was considered to be low. Similarly, the degree of issue strength was at a low level with few, if any, clear issues identified and certainly no commitment for issue resolution. However, in both instances, the degree of information immediacy was extremely intense and at high level. In both cases information had just been made available to the subject and the proposed process involved VTR documentation of the subjects' reaction to that information.

Communication was considered to be facilitated in both situations since the **process was observed to occur precisely as proposed**. Therefore, the subjects in Case 3C and Case 11 arrived at a **low** risk judgment and although the risk level was elevated, it must have remained lower than the reference level.

Observation B:

Case 3B

Subject (b):

Subject (b) agreed to the VTR documentation but remained highly anxious throughout the interview. The subject appeared to know very little about the organization in question and was unable to respond to the animator's information and questioning. After ten to fifteen minutes of attempted discussion, the interview was stopped.

After reviewing the tape, the subject appeared unhappy with the document but, upon request, consented to its use if the worker considered it useful. The VTR documentation occurred in the subject's home.

Subject (c):

Subject (c) was videotaped in the worker's home and the response was identical to that of subject (b). As in subject (b)'s case, subject (c) had very little information or knowledge about the organization in question and was unable to respond adequately to the worker's information and questions. The interview duration was ap-

[2] See hypothesis #3 (d) in Appendix C.

proximately eight minutes and the subject agreed to the use of the entire document if the worker considered it useful.

SUMMARY OF OBSERVATION (B):
— Process was modified unintentionally
— Therefore, a High Risk Judgment

Case	Control	Outcome Visibility	VPL	Information Immediacy	Issue Strength	Routineness
3B (b)	Low	High	Low	Low	Low	Low
3B (c)	Low	High	Low	Low	Low	Low

In both of the above Cases [Case 3B, subjects (b) and (c)], the risk level was considered to be at a relatively high level due to a low level of subject control and a high value of potential loss (in spite of a high degree of outcome visibility).

The situations were separate and unique, which indicated a low level of routineness. Similarly, neither of the subjects had strong feelings relating to the interview questions, thus indicating a low level of issue strength.

Furthermore, no information relating to the interview content reached the subjects immediately prior to the interview; hence, a **low degree of information immediacy.** Communication was observed to be inhibited due to the subject's **unintentional modification of the process proposed**, indicated by the subject's inability to respond adequately to the interview questions because of a high state of anxiety. Consequently, the subjects arrived at a **high** risk judgment and a decision that the process was unacceptable.

Conclusion:

After comparing Observation (A) and Observation (B), the only factor that changed as the risk judgment changed, was the degree of information immediacy.

Therefore, it is hypothesized that:

> The degree of information immediacy is **directly proportional** to the reference level.

(b) *ISSUE STRENGTH*

Observation A:

Case 12

During a public demonstration of concern over a local issue, at which the community development worker was present with VTR, the subject contracted with the worker for a process that involved VTR documentation of the subject's feelings of concern regarding the "demonstration" issue.

The animator at that time was uncertain how the information would be made available to the community and was unable to define who would see what portions of the VTR document to be produced. The issue involved intense feelings, with some degree of polarization between a minority group of "sympathizers" and the remainder of the community. However, the subject allowed the process to proceed as originally proposed and mutually agreed upon between the subject and the animator. Except for a few initial signs of anxiety, the subject coherently expressed intense feelings about the community issue. After documentation the subject immediately reviewed the document, approved the initial product, and approved the animator assuming the responsibility for future editing.

Case 3B

Suoject (d):

The interview was conducted in the subject's office of employment. The subject agreed to the documentation and actively responded with few signs of anxiety and little inhibition very soon after the process had commenced. The subject's present role and past experience provided a substantial information base for responding to the worker's questions. The documentation duration was approximately one hour, with the subject expressing intense feelings regarding his perception of the organization in question and what functions he thought the organization should be performing within the community.

After viewing the document, the subject granted permission for the worker to use any or all of the VTR document.

SUMMARY OF OBSERVATION (A):
— Process occurred as proposed
— Therefore, a Low Risk Judgment

Case	Control	Outcome Visibility	VPL	Information Immediacy	Issue Strength	Routineness
12	Low	Low	High	Low*	High	Low
3B(d)	Low	High	Low	Low	High	Low

* Moderate activity

In both Cases 12 and 3B(d), the risk level was considered to be relatively high due to a low level of subject control, and a high value of potential loss in Case 12 due to a low degree of outcome visibility.[3]

Case 3B(d) involved a low degree of information immediacy as relevant information had not directly preceded the proposal for VTR documentation. For Case 12, however, it was considered that information immediacy was somewhat higher in that the process was proposed and contracted with the individual shortly after a demonstration of concern for purposes of developing public awareness. However, the actual VTR documentation did not

[3] See hypothesis #3 (d) in Appendix C.

take place until some time after the demonstration. Therefore, information immediacy might have played a role in the initial acceptance of a proposed process, but it was not a relevant factor during the actual VTR documentation. Both Cases 12 and 3B(d) were considered unique and separate entities and therefore had a low level of routineness.

However, in both Cases the issue strength factor was obviously elevated as both subjects, at the time the process was initially proposed and during the actual VTR documentation, had a clear comprehension of the issues involved, and were committed somewhat to assisting in the resolution of those issues.

The **process was observed to occur as originally proposed** indicating in both instances a **low** risk judgment, a higher reference level than risk level, and a situation where VTR documentation facilitated communication processes.

Observation B:

Case 3D

As a result of the group motivation generated during the group reaction to the self-appraisal VTR document, the group became concerned as to their real role in the community — particularly with respect to a specific sector of the community examined by subject (d) in the self-appraisal document.

The group decided to attempt to contact a specific individual representing this sector of concern, who had earlier expressed the same concern. It was hoped that the subject would consent to VTR documentation by the organization involved. The documentation was to express the subject's perspective of the area of concern and the subject's feelings as to how the organization could be of assistance.

However, when approached by the organization, the subject refused to have statements of concern expressed earlier documented on VTR. Hence, the process was abandoned.

Case 3B

Subject (b) and Subject (c)

(See Observation B, page 18.)

SUMMARY OF OBSERVATION (B):

— Process abandoned or modified intentionally
— Therefore, a High Risk Judgment

Case	Control	Outcome Visibility	VPL	Information Immediacy	Issue Strength	Routineness
3D	Low	Low	High	Low	Low *	Low
3B(b)	Low	High	Low	Low	Low	Low
3B(c)	Low	High	Low	Low	Low	Low

* Moderate strength or activity

In Cases 3D, and 3B, subjects (b) and (c), the risk level was considered to be relatively high due to a low level of subject control. In Case 3D the risk level might have been even higher due to a low degree of outcome visibility and hence a high value of potential loss.

All three Cases were unique and separate instances with a low level of routineness. In Case 3B, subjects (c) and (d), the degree of issue strength was considered at a low level; however, in Case 3D the issue strength might have been somewhat greater if the group's perceptions of the subject were initially correct. Still, there were no issue strength data available from the instant when the group proposed the VTR documentation process to the subject. Furthermore, in all three Cases, the information immediacy factor was nonoperative.

In Case 3D the process was completely abandoned, whereas in Case 3B(b) and 3B(c) the process was **unintentionally modified**, indicating a **high** risk judgment in all three Cases with the risk level elevated higher than the subjects' reference level. Thus, VTR **inhibited** the communication processes.

Conclusion:

After comparing Observations (A) and (B), the only factor that changed as the risk judgment changed was the **issue strength** factor.

Therefore, it is hypothesized that:

> The strength of the issue involved in the proposed process is **directly proportional** to the reference level.

(c) *ROUTINENESS*

Observation A:

Case 14

A.

When the community development worker attempted to arrange to document portions of a closed-door meeting between the "city hall" and influential actors external to the community, the proposed process was refused or at least modified in a very deliberate way. The modified proposed proposal involved a suggestion by the city hall people that the animator document information released at a common press conference, just as with any of the other news media.

B.

The press conference proved, as one might expect, to be a very routine activity for the city hall people and the presence of the animator and the VTR facilities was perceived as merely a part of the mass media — a fairly routine procedure for them. Hence, the presence of the VTR appeared to have very little effect on the participants.

Case 13

The animator was contracted to document the local little theater practice prior to the public's review of the play. The purpose of the documentation was to provide feedback for the actors. The presence of the VTR equipment appeared to have very little effect on the participants.

SUMMARY OF OBSERVATION (A):
— Process is accepted as proposed
— Therefore, a Low Risk Judgment

Case	Control	Outcome Visibility	VPL	Information Immediacy	Issue Strength	Routineness
14B	Low	High	Low	Low	Low	High
13	Low	High	Low	Low	Low	High

In both of the above Cases the risk level was only moderately high in that the only active factor influencing the risk level was the control factor. In both situations the subject had no control over the VTR documentation process. However, in both situations the outcome visibility was rated as high and the value of potential loss as being insignificant and at a lost level.

In Case 13 the information immediacy factor was insignificant whereas in Case 14B the information immediacy factor might have been somewhat higher in that the press release followed a series of discussions; however, the press release was planned several weeks in advance and the information released could also have been planned several weeks in advance rather than arising directly from the preceding discussions. In both Cases, clear-cut issues were not involved; therefore, the issue strength factor was not involved.

On the other hand, the **routineness** factor was evident in both Cases. In Case 14B the press release was pre-planned, well in advance, and a routine procedure for those involved. Case 13 involved play rehearsals prior to the VTR documentation.

In both Cases the proposed processes were **accepted as proposed**, indicating a **low** risk judgment and reference levels higher than risk levels. Thus, the VTR documentation process facilitated communication.

Observation B:

Case 3B

Subject (b) and Subject (c)

(See Observation B, page 18.)

SUMMARY OF OBSERVATION (B):
— Process is modified unintentionally
— Therefore, a High Risk Judgment

Case	Control	Outcome Visibility	VPL	Information Immediacy	Issue Strength	Routineness
3B(b)	Low	High	Low	Low	Low	Low
3B(c)	Low	High	Low	Low	Low	Low

As described several times earlier in this report, both of the above examples experienced moderately elevated risk levels due to low degree of subject control over the VTR process. Both situations also involved a depressed reference level as a result of the inactivity and low level of the three reference level factors — information immediacy, issue strength, and routineness.

In both instances the process was **unintentionally modified** indicating a **high** risk judgment and an unacceptable process due to greater risk levels than reference levels. Consequently the VTR process inhibited communication.

Conclusion:

After comparing Observations (A) and (B), the only factor that changed as the risk changed was the routineness factor.

Therefore, it is hypothesized that:

> The degree of routineness involved in the proposed process is **directly proportional** to the reference level.

(d) *DURATION OF VTR DOCUMENTATION*

Observation:

Case 15A

The process was proposed that the subject, a middle-aged activist in a community issue involving the youth sector of the community, have his feelings and thoughts regarding the youth issue documented via VTR (similar to Case 12).

Prior to the documentation and immediately after the documentation had commenced, the subject responded to the worker's questions in a relatively incoherent fashion and demonstrated signs of acute anxiety. After some persistence on the part of the animator, the signs of anxiety dissipated as the subject became more and more immersed in describing his involvement with the issue.

The community development worker was interviewing but was also accompanied by one of the leaders in the "youth issue," who operated the VTR camera.

Case 16B

After an initial series of public meetings with the cable companies, the community core group had isolated a series of issues they felt had to be resolved to the community's satisfaction before a cable license was granted for the community. Therefore a public forum was organized to:

(1) again confront license applicants with the immediate and most pressing communication issues;

(2) facilitate dialogue between the community and the communication policy-makers;

(3) sensitize provincial policy-makers to the current communication concerns;

(4) further diffuse information to the immediate community.

Very early in the public forum planning process, the core group made plans to request funds from the federal government to finance the forum. Concern by the group over their perceived inability to express the community concerns adequately in the appropriate application form supplied by the federal government, resulted in a VTR document being produced.

The document was produced by four representatives of the core group along with the community development worker operating the camera. Their documented conversation was spontaneous and directed at each other, but in such a way as to paint a picture of the community and its communications concerns as they should be communicated to the appropriate funding agency.

Initially the group was highly anxious and aware of the VTR. Several times the subjects would stop in the middle of a tense statement and ask that the VTR be turned off for a moment to relieve the tension and to allow the statement to be repeated. However, the animator did not stop the VTR and simply reassured the subjects by reminding them that they would be able to edit out such statements if they wished.

After approximately eight minutes, the group had evolved to a point where they completely ignored the VTR and were more concerned about expressing to each other the communication issues they had isolated and discussed for so many months.

Hence a transition occurred within a few minutes from a state of relative incoherence and anxiety to a state of content immersion (vis-à-vis the communication issues) and a high level of intra-group communication.

In Case 16B, Case 15A, and subject (a) in Case 3B, it was observed that evidence of content immersion was not apparent at the beginning of the VTR documentation, but rather tended to increase as the process proceeded and occurred as the subjects became involved in expressing concerns important to them.

The above observations were categorized as transitional: from an **unintentionally modified** process to the **process as it was proposed**. Thus, the transition was really from a situation of **high** risk judgment to a situation of **low** risk judgment.

Conclusion:

Since for each given situation the risk level factors do not change over the period of transition, one must assume that the risk level remains constant. However, gradual acceptance of the proposed process indicates a **reduction** in the subject's **risk judgment**. This can only be accomplished by the subject elevating his or her reference level.

Therefore, it is hypothesized that:

> The risk level and the reference level operate independently of each other.

As a result of the preceding observations, it is also hypothesized that:

> (a) In any given situation there is a minimum threshold time of subject exposure to VTR documentation processes, before content immersion can take place.
>
> (b) The duration of subject exposure to the VTR documentation process, within a given situation, is **directly proportional** to the probability that reference level elevation will occur.

(e) *NUMBER OF SUBJECTS DOCUMENTED*

Observation:

There appears to be a relationship between the number of subjects documented and the level of risk judgment. It was observed that groups were generally concerned with communicating on an intra-group basis and seemed less **aware** of the VTR documentation facilities present than individuals were.

However, in situations where single individuals found themselves looking directly at the camera, with the worker operating the camera, the subject attempted to interact with the worker-camera complex. It was also observed that the worker-camera complex diminished the worker's ability to communicate, particularly **non-verbally**, while operating the camera. Therefore, "communication" was one way, the subject was aware of the documentation facilities and, as a result, the subject's intended communication was likely to be affected.

Conclusion:

Hence, the probability of a low risk judgment was greater when groups were documented than when single individuals were documented. A low risk judgment implies less communication inhibition, and a greater chance that the process will occur as proposed.

Therefore, it is hypothesized that:

> The probability that a VTR documentation process **will proceed as proposed** (as a result of reference elevation due to content immersion) is greater in a situation where **two or more individuals** are involved than it is in situations where single individuals are being documented.

(f) *VTR PROCESS IMMERSION*

Observations:

In this study, all of the proposed processes (stage A of the Risk Model) involved the use of VTR facilities in an attempt to facilitate intended communication processes. However, it quickly became evident that the aura or mystique accompanying the VTR facility on occasions facilitated the acceptance of a process and on other occasions actually retarded the acceptance of a process.

One of the very early objectives adopted in the overall community development process was to facilitate the process of VTR demystification so that individuals could utilize VTR as an extension of themselves to probe and communicate with others in their community.

The aura or mystique accompanying VTR proved in some instances to be a barrier to its use; thus resulting in the subject's high risk judgment of the proposed process. This negative dimension of the VTR mystique is accounted for in the proposed Risk Model in the three risk level factors — in particular, the control factor. On the other hand, the positive dimension of the VTR mystique remains to be examined here.

Observation:

Case 9

A group of young people, ages 11 to 13, were interested in producing a VTR document describing their immediate cultural environment and their relationship to it. Later they were to share their VTR document (along with others using different media) with friends and relatives. The proposed process included the offer of providing the subjects with instruction in the operation of the VTR facilities and to encourage them to take the VTR and produce their own document. The originally proposed process left the animator responsible only for offering technical assistance in terms of the mechanical aspect of the editing procedure.

The proposal was accepted as proposed and a document was produced by the subjects which in turn was screened for their friends and relatives in the community as originally proposed.

The VTR document included the subjects themselves displaying very little, if any, inhibition in front of the camera and it illustrated the subjects in their daily routine. During the community screening, the subjects displayed a great deal of pride and confidence in operating the VTR playback. The role of the community development worker was very "low key." The audience response to the screening was overwhelmingly positive and reinforcing for the subjects.

Case 8

A.

A community development seminar was videotaped by a group of students from the community. During the seminar, a core committee of representatives was elected to insure that the process initiated during the seminar was able to continue. One of the committee's immediate objectives was to edit the seminar videotapes to produce a document useful for diffusing information throughout the larger community with regard to concerns expressed at the seminar. Hence, a subcommittee of two, from the core committee, assumed responsibility for editing the videotape.

B.

After making all of the editing decisions on paper, the two subjects responsible for editing prepared an edited audiotape to enable them to receive community feedback regarding their final product. The first individual to review the audiotape and hence the decisions made was a close relative (subject X) of one of the subjects responsible for editing. Subject X reacted intensely to a specific section of the tape criticizing a certain sector of his community upon which subject X was dependent for his livelihood. Therefore, vested interests propelled subject X into attempting to deliberately modify the process and influence the editing decisions.

Even though some others in the community did not share the concern of subject X, that portion of the VTR document of concern to subject X was discarded. Thus subject X intentionally modified the process to reduce personal risk.

Case 17

The subjects were approached by the animator with the proposal that they assume a documentation role with the VTR facilities and produce a VTR profile of their community. The animator's expectations were that such a production would facilitate community self-appraisal, and a re-examination of what their community really was and what was happening to it. It was also anticipated that the VTR document produced would be screened at a gathering of their community along with other surrounding communities with similar problems.

The subjects were provided with both documentation and editing facilities and except for the assumed expectations surrounding the VTR facilities, the subjects had complete control of the VTR facilities and indeed, the process itself. As the process proceeded, it was carefully observed and monitored by the animator — particularly with respect to the subjects' degree of satisfaction with the process as it was proceeding and their motivation to continue with the process.

After the process was proposed and accepted, the degree of satisfaction and motivation immediately rose to a very high level as the subjects explored the VTR medium itself in low risk situations. However, as the subjects identified portions of their community for documentation, and the actual community documentation commenced, the satisfaction level began to drop and reached its lowest level about halfway through the documentation process, at which point it began to rise again.

The second peak was reached just prior to the editing process and the subjects expressed feelings of accomplishment; however, the long editing process, in particular the logging process, proved extremely costly in subject time and energy and the degree of satisfaction dropped to its lowest level just after the decision-making process had commenced.

The level of satisfaction then appeared to rise, at first slowly and then rapidly as the final product was completed and screened for the community. Continuous screenings and repeated positive feedback further motivated the subjects to the point that the subjects agreed to a second related process that was proposed, which was to involve their participation and VTR documentation of the larger gathering of neighboring communities. However, during the regional meeting, an attempt by the subjects to participate in the decision-making and information sharing resulted in some negative feedback and social "put downs" causing the subjects to withdraw from the process. The process monitoring ceased as the subjects' satisfaction level was again lowered due to negative process feedback.[4]

It appears that when subjects had a high degree of control over the VTR facilities, as was the occasion in Cases 8A, 9, and 17, the risk was continuously judged by the subjects and the subjects' degree of motivation to work with VTR was based on their risk judgment as the process proceeded.

Both Cases 8 and 17 involved subjects who, prior to the process proposal, had no experience or direct contact with VTR facilities and thus required a process of VTR demystification.

From the study field data and the animator's feelings and perceptions of events as they occurred, highly subjective **process profiles** were constructed for Cases 8 and 17, as illustrated in Figure H.

Figure H illustrates profiles of the processes in Cases 8 and 17. The processes were subjectively monitored and stimulated by the animator through meetings, letters, and telephone conversations. The author attempted to assess, in retrospect, the subjects' degree of motivation or satisfaction with the VTR process at various points as it flowed towards a termination point.

In Figure H, the process events between A and B indicate the growing confidence of the subjects involved and B indicated maximum immersion with the VTR facilities — **usually in very low risk situations**. As the subjects attempted to turn their attention and energy outwards to their community around them and away from the VTR process itself, the subjects' risk judgment of the process increased and their degree of motivation and satisfaction declined to a point at level C.

In Case 17 the initial stages of the editing process required a great deal of the subjects' time and energy and as the "cost" to the subjects increased, their degree of **satisfaction decreased** from level D to level E. As the editing process neared completion and their final product began to emerge, the subjects' degree of satisfaction increased and continued to do so as the subjects shared their "message" with their community and continued to receive **positive** feedback and reinforcement.

Conclusion:

It is assumed that as the process was proposed in Cases 8 and 17, the risk level was relatively depressed, and the reference level was relatively elevated due to the technology mystique referred to here as **VTR process immersion factor.**

By definition, the VTR mystique virtually disappears after the VTR demystification process is completed (points B to C). Any satisfaction and motivation remaining is satisfaction derived from the total process of using VTR as an extension of the individual for purposes of communication.

Hence the VTR process immersion factor is dynamic and elevates the subject's reference level in the process between the chronological points A and B — that is, immediately after the process is proposed and until the first profile peak where the VTR demystification process begins. The VTR process immersion factor remains dynamic in diminishing amounts as the VTR demystification process occurs (B to C), and the amount of reference level elevation diminishes.

However, the total **amount** of the subject's satisfaction and motivation derived from the VTR process immersion factor may be **quantified as the vertical distance between the first profile peak (B) and the first profile depression (C)**. All other satisfaction and motivation remaining were derived

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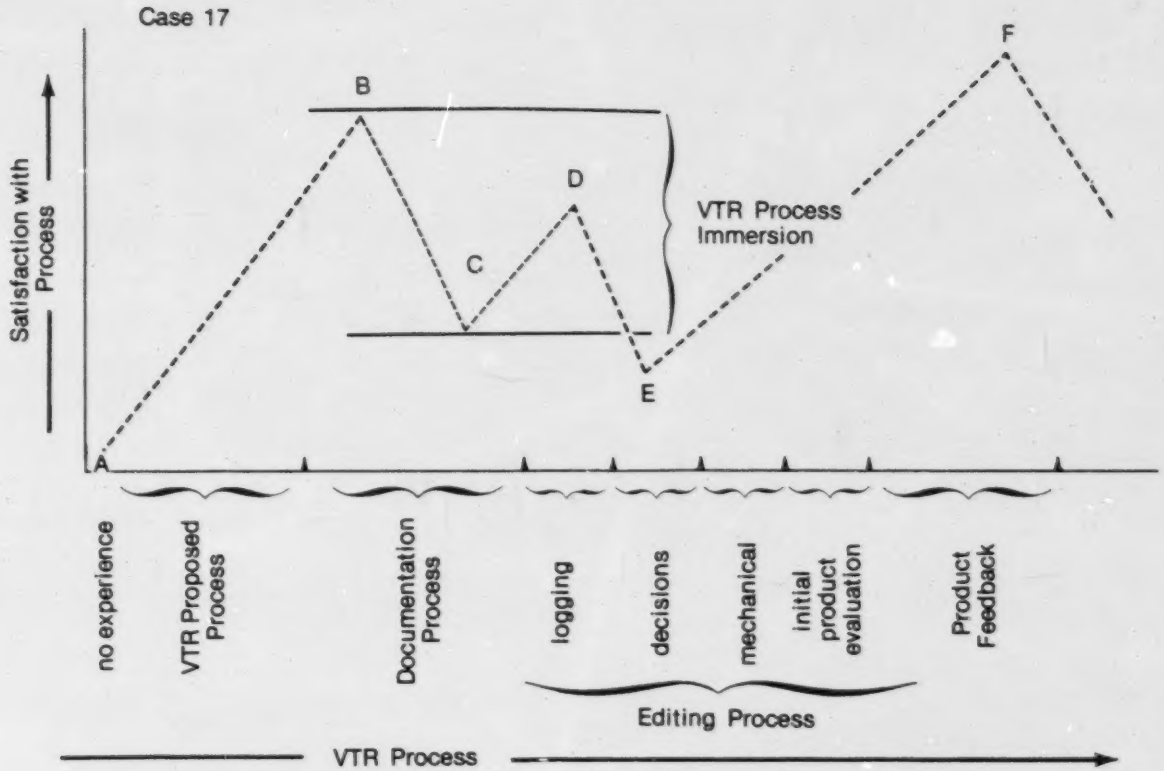
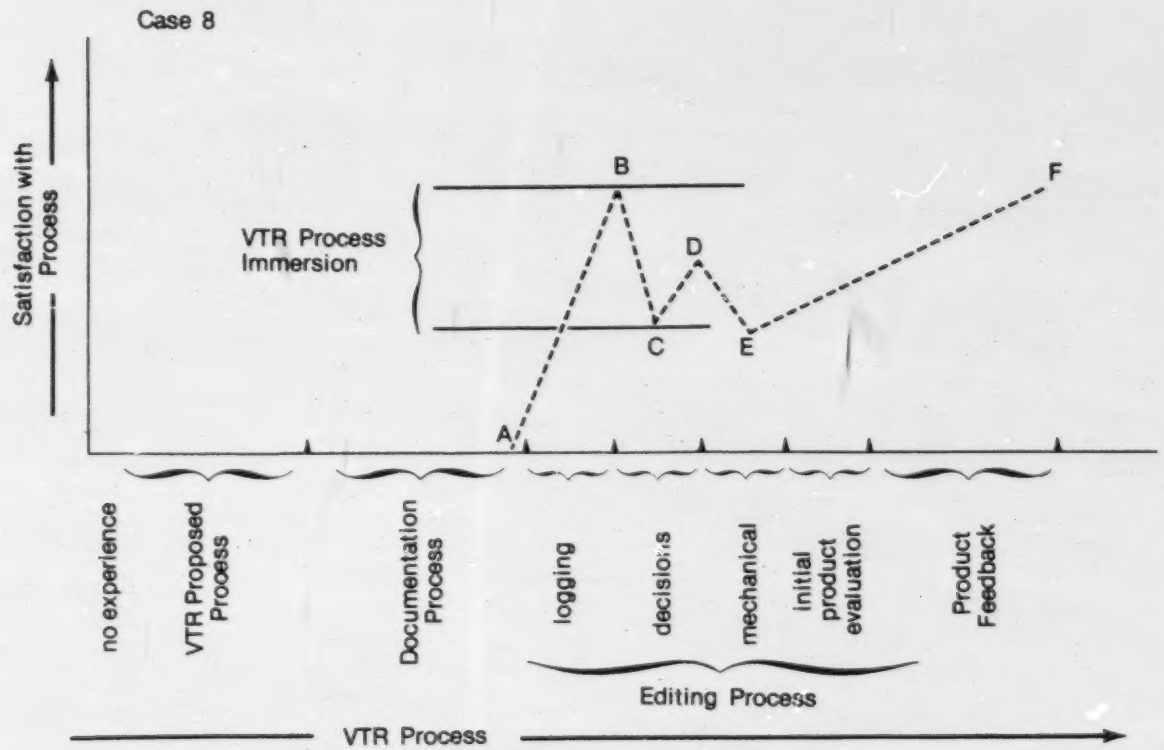
[4] *Infra*., p. 38 for remainder of Case 17.

FIGURE H

Process Profiles Illustrating VTR Process Immersion





from other sources such as issue strength and information immediacy.

Therefore it is hypothesized that:

1. The degree of VTR mystification or process immersion is directly proportional to the reference level.
2. When influenced by the VTR process immersion factor, the reference level **reaches a maximum elevation** and as the mystique disappears, the reference level becomes **depressed**.
3. The tendency for the reference level to be depressed continues until the VTR process immersion factor is **reduced to a state of inactivity**.

CHAPTER III

VTR DOCUMENTATION — A FORCE WITH DIRECTIONAL SPECIFICITY

There is little doubt that as a result of VTR documentation within a given situation something new is injected into the situation that alters the proposed process, thus inhibiting the communication process. There also appears to be some evidence that the VTR force may be defined in terms of **direction** as well as **magnitude**, both of which are dependent upon documentation conditions.

Some animators have likened their use of VTR to the use of a "weapon."[1] In these situations VTR was used to simultaneously intimidate certain individuals while reinforcing others. This dual role for VTR can best be defined by the following example:

Observation:

Case 16A

A volunteer community action group, containing the resident community development worker, was organized to help the community deal with a local issue involving the development of community access to existing communications media. It was also organized to facilitate the evolution of a "cable" information system designed to meet the community's needs.

This process involved the gathering of information regarding both existing and future community communications media; the diffusion of such information to the general community; and the organization of the community to deal with specific communications issues affecting the community.

Part of the "information gathering" process involved the establishment of a series of community information meetings with cable license applicants competing for a license to "cable" the community in question. In the early stages, it soon became evident that the applicants were confident and projecting a "super salesman" image. On the other hand, although the community "core" group was becoming better equipped with information and more confident, the community was in various stages of naivety relative to the cable company representatives.

Therefore, during the public meetings with the subjects (cable company representatives applying for licenses), VTR was used by the community group to document the entire session for each meeting. The subjects were not given the option of participating in the editing process. However, they were provided with the rationale for the VTR documentation of the public meetings. This rationale, provided by the community development worker and the rest of the community group, was that the documented information would be:

(1) usefully shared with the rest of the community;

(2) usefully shared with the communications policy-makers;

(3) usefully stored for later recall.

The animator assumed responsibility for assuring that the rationale for the VTR documentation was indeed communicated to the subjects (cable applicants) at each meeting.

In each of the three meetings, the subjects were acutely aware of the presence of the VTR and made frequent references to it. In two of the three meetings, the subjects also exhibited marked signs of anxiety and nervousness. On the other hand, the community group appeared to gain some confidence and did not demonstrate an abundance of anxiety. If the group demonstrated anything, it was a surprising degree of subject-directed aggressiveness which had been noticeably missing from earlier community meetings when the subjects and VTR were absent. Thus the situation was mildly polarized — the community vs. the subjects — with the VTR on the community's side.

In the preceding example, it was observed that the subjects' behavior was modified both **intentionally** (as they avoided releasing too much information) and **unintentionally** (as indicated by signs of anxiety). Hence, from the subjects' perspective, communication was indeed inhibited.

As communication appeared inhibited from the subjects' perspective, communication **did not** appear inhibited from the perspective of the community representatives. In fact, if anything, it was observed that the group experienced **reduced anxiety** and some reinforcement from the pressure of the VTR.

G. Basen[2] of the Parallel Institute has made the observation that VTR was used effectively in the "weapon" context, even though in some instances it had not actually been operating. Therefore, if one assumes that the presence of VTR documentation facilities can indeed project a force with **directional** qualities as well as magnitude, then it becomes imperative for social animators using VTR to attempt to control the direction of that force.

In the example above, **direction** appeared to have occurred as a result of the following procedures:

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[1] *Cinema as Catalyst*, A report by S. Gwyn on the Seminar "Film, Videotape and Social Change," St. John's, Newfoundland, organized by the Extension Services, Memorial University of Newfoundland, March 13-24, 1972, pp. 16-17.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 17

(1) preliminary conversation with the subjects describing the rationale for VTR, such as the fact that all statements would be documented on videotape and edited (without necessarily the subjects' involvement) to show to both the community (potential consumers) and the regulating body as part of the community brief;

(2) the individual (in this example the animator) using VTR was perceived by the subjects as a member of the community; that is, questions were directed from the camera.

In this way a strategy was initiated prior to the proposed process to affect the subjects' perception of the process and to facilitate the development of a specific set of expectations. Similarly, prior to the process and during the process, there was a developing awareness by the community group of how the subjects perceived the situation. Thus, the situation was perceived as being mildly polarized — the community vs. the subject — with the VTR on the "community's side."

Such mild polarization has led to the development of greater community consensus, which in turn has led towards mutual group reinforcement, greater issue clarity, greater commitment, and less overall communication inhibition Thus, VTR has frequently been described by animators as a "social equalizer."

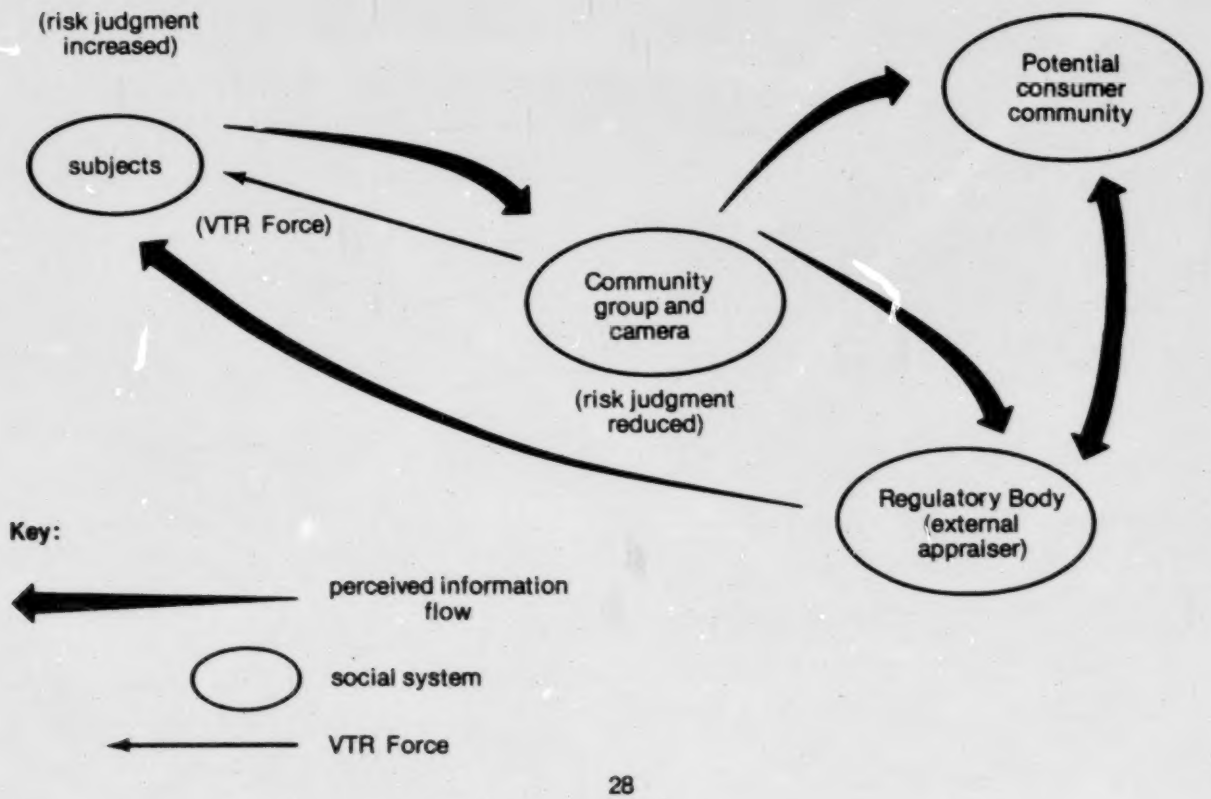
Conclusions:

From these observations, the following hypotheses are proposed:

1. VTR documentation can exert a force with both directional specificity and magnitude.
2. The VTR force may either facilitate communication (due to low risk judgment) or inhibit communication (due to high risk judgment).
3. The direction of the force exerted is dependent upon the role of the VTR documentation process as perceived by the subjects within the situation.
4. The role of the VTR documentation process as perceived by the subjects within a given situation can be affected by individuals within the situation (e.g., animators).

If VTR documentation forces do exist with magnitudinal and directional dimensions, then by applying simple force vector principles, one might hypothesize that within a given situation:

The more diffuse the direction of the force, as a result of greater numbers documented, the **less the magnitude applied to any single individual; hence, the lower the risk judgment and the less the communication inhibition.**



If this hypothesis holds true, it may then serve to explain the observation that content immersion occurs more readily when a group of individuals are subjected to VTR documentation than when single individuals are documented (see page 22).

In terms of the Risk Model, it would appear that within a given situation a proposed VTR process can induce certain subjects to judge the process as a high risk situation and thus unacceptable, whereas others may perceive the same situation as a low risk situation and quite acceptable.

The high risk judgment is probably generated as a result of the VTR process activating all three risk variables to elevate the subject's risk level beyond his or her reference level. On the other hand, the low risk judgment is probably generated as a result of a risk level depression due to the "weapon" phenomenon; that is, the subject feels very much in **control** of the total situation at the expense of his or her opponent's control over the same situation.

Thus it appears that the key is the **control** factor affecting the risk level. The control factor appears to be dynamic in both instances where:

(a) the lack of control has elevated the risk level resulting in a high risk judgment;

(b) the control perceived by the subject at the expense of the opposition has the effect of depressing the subject's risk level and hence inducing a low risk judgment and positive reinforcement.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS FOR THE SOCIAL ANIMATOR

The hypotheses[1] and theory developed in this paper can best be expressed by the model diagrammed in Figure A (page 4).

Initially, a process (stage A in the Risk Model), is proposed either by one or more of the subjects involved in the process or by an agent external to the process subjects. As the subjects consider the proposal, an evaluation process (stage B) occurs where the risk level perceived to be inherent in the proposed process is compared to an established reference level to determine or judge whether or not the overall risk is low enough to be acceptable to the subject(s).

The risk judgment (stage C) results in the final decision as to how acceptable the overall risk is. If the risk level is **higher** than the reference level, the overall risk is considered too high and is unacceptable.

On the other hand, if the risk level is **lower** than the reference level, the overall risk is judged to be low and acceptable to the subject(s).

The risk judgment procedure leads to **one** of a series of process decisions (stage D) being made which will determine what happens to the proposed process. If the risk judgment is too high and unacceptable, the proposed process will:

(1) be abandoned completely;
(2) be modified by the subjects either intentionally or unintentionally;
(3) undergo a transition from initial modification by the subject(s) (usually unintentionally) to the process as it was originally proposed.

If the risk judgment is sufficiently low so as to be acceptable to the subject(s), then the process will proceed as proposed. Therefore, the observable phenomena are:

(1) the proposed process with its accompanying strategies (stage A); and (2) the process that actually occurs after the appropriate process decision (stage D) is made; while stages C and B of the process are covert and not observable.

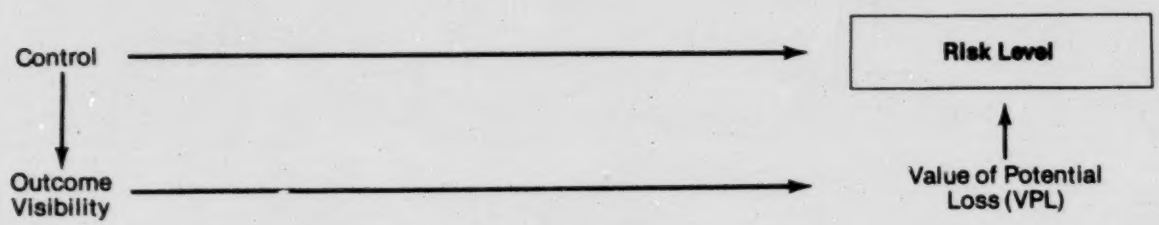
Evidence suggests that the reference level and the risk level operate independently of each other and are elevated or depressed due to a variety of factors that are inherent in the proposed process. This study has attempted to isolate those factors and define their relationship to the final outcome of a proposed process and their relationship to each other.

The factors affecting the risk level were isolated and their relationships determined. The isolated risk level factors are: **control, outcome visibility,** and **value of potential loss or gain**. As illustrated below, anticipated control of the proposed process can affect the risk level directly in that the less control the subject has over the proposed process, the greater the risk level.

The value of potential loss factor also affects the risk level directly in that the greater the value of potential loss to the subject, the greater the risk level.

Outcome visibility has an indirect relationship with the risk level through the value of potential loss factor. However, control affects the outcome visibility factor, and outcome visibility only becomes active when the control factor is low. At that time, if outcome visibility is also low, the value of potential loss is automatically high, contributing to a high risk level.

The reference level is, no doubt, influenced by the subject's past experience, a set of content immersion factors, and VTR process immersion factors isolated in this study. The content immersion factors thus isolated are: **information**



[1] See Appendix C for a summary of all hypotheses developed.

immediacy, issue strength, degree of routineness, VTR duration, and **number of subjects documented.** The study data suggested that a strengthening of any of the five content immersion factors or the **VTR process immersion factor** would tend to **elevate** the subject's reference level, thus lowering the probability of a high and unacceptable risk judgment.

Finally, there is evidence from the data used in this study, and from others using VTR in a social animation context, to suggest that the very existence of VTR documentation facilities in a given situation can result in VTR projecting a force with **directional** as well as **magnitudinal** qualities.

This hypothetical force appears to intimidate the subjects it is directed at and is responsible for inhibiting their communication, (probably by elevating the subjects' risk level). In fact, the force tends to have a mildly polarizing effect on a given situation in that some subjects are intimidated, and others, associated with the VTR, appear not to be intimidated. In fact, there is evidence that the behavior or process of the subjects associated with the VTR is indeed reinforced (probably because of the subjects' risk level depression).

This study has further suggested that the direction of the VTR force may be controlled by a sensitive animator, if the animator is able to influence the subjects' expectations and perceptions of VTR and its intended uses.

If one assumes that the theory is sufficiently descriptive of the real phenomena to merit consideration, then the implications for the community development worker are very real:

(1) It is extremely important for the animator to develop a high degree of subject or client sensitivity and put himself or herself in the subject's role in order to better understand how the subject perceives the proposed process.

(2) The risk level can be reduced if the animator is indeed sensitive to his client and the situation, and incorporates in the process proposed elements that will reduce the perceived risk level.

(3) The animator should be concerned about maintaining an elevated reference level simply by capitalizing on specific strategies designed to activate the reference level variables.

(4) If the VTR force hypothesized in this study is real, then it becomes important that the animator familiarize himself or herself with the force so that its effect on the total process can be effectively controlled. Effective control implies that the application of the VTR force should facilitate rather than inhibit the process.

(5) Probably the most significant implication is that an attempt has been made to theorize or categorize real observations of the use of VTR as an instrument for community development. The purpose of theory development surely is to provide an organizational framework for both understanding and communicating phenomena observed. Unfortunately, to date, much of the contemporary social action and subsequent insights — particularly those utilizing VTR and film media technology — have not been available for public scrutiny and further synthesis.

The model presented in this report represents the integration of emergent hypotheses developed and proposed in this report. Therefore, this report proposes a theory describing the use of VTR as a tool for social action, which is grounded on and **derived from an analysis of observed phenomena.**

The observational limitations inherent in the study project have been expressed several times throughout the report; that is, the social-action portion of the project was implemented with very few parameters or preconceived notions of what was going to happen or what should happen, over and above the basic value system carried with the animator.

Because of the unfolding, or developmental, nature of the project, the collection of data was completely dependent upon the animator's observations and field notes. So, in fact, this study proposes a grounded theory having emerged from real observations. As for any other theory, further quantitative information should be collected, synthesized, and applied to the proposed theory, before it can be considered as an accurate description.

APPENDIX A

Case 1

During a preliminary discussion with the subject, the subject emphasized his feelings of discontent and dislike for the general community and expressed his feeling that the community was not a friendly one. The subject was particularly concerned that professional educators dominated the community social structure.

During the discussion, the subject bitterly expressed his feelings that the community had unjustly alienated the industry which he represented as a professional and which had been located in the community for a number of years.

Two months later, during another casual meeting with the animator, the subject was introduced to VTR for the first time. The animator directed the camera at the subject and posed questions in such a way as to coerce the subject into attempting to discuss his feelings as he had expressed them in the earlier meeting with regard to the community.

Upon questioning, the subject was well aware of the response the animator expected (due to the sharing of information at the earlier meeting), but the subject was highly anxious and had a great deal of trouble expressing himself before the VTR. After viewing the replay, he described the experience as one of being confronted with a "one-eye, cold, icy, stare" and he described his feelings of "isolation and unfamiliarity" with the worker during the documentation process.

Case 2

During a discussion with an individual (a provincial civil servant) the subject articulated a concern for the quality of education in the community and in the province as a whole. The subject was concerned with the multitude of serious rifts that existed between the different educational roles: parent-student-teacher-taxpayer-provincial government-community as a whole, etc. He was concerned that the community had lost control to the provincial government of too many educational decisions as a result of a movement towards centralization of political decision-making.

Several days later, the subject was again contacted and the worker proposed VTR documentation of his feelings vis-à-vis the educational decision-making; however, the subject initially refused to be documented. The worker was undecided as to how such a document could be used to help resolve the concern expressed. Therefore, the subject was told that his information might be edited into a package with information from others expressing similar concerns and then screened for specific audiences. The animator assured the subject that he would be consulted prior to such screenings and have the right to edit his comments or refuse to have them screened.

After considerable prompting and persuasion from the worker, the subject finally consented to reconsidering the matter, but assured the worker that if he did participate, it would be with a great deal of caution and that he was not prepared to express himself as strongly as he had earlier.

Hence, the VTR documentation did not take place and the process was generally considered abandoned.

Case 3

A.

A local organization had contacted the community development worker to determine how it might gain access to the VTR facilities in the possession of the worker. After some discussion, the worker received an invitation to attend a meeting of the organization's executive to explain his community development and VTR role in the community.

In the interim, prior to the meeting, the animator contacted a number of individuals to videotape their perception of the organization in question. During each interview, only one subject was involved and the community development worker operated the VTR facilities and conducted the interview. Prior to the interviews, all subjects were instructed as to the use of the VTR document which was to be produced, and assured that they would be able to review themselves on videotape and retain the option of editing out or removing part or all of their documentation from future screenings. All of the subjects were instructed to pretend they were speaking to the organization when responding to the animator's questions. However, the subjects were not exposed to the questions or the issues to be raised prior to the VTR documentation.

B.

Subject (a)

The subject agreed to the VTR proposal but immediately upon commencement of the interview, the subject became highly anxious. However, after a few minutes of discussion and VTR documentation, the subject appeared to relax and put forward very strong feelings about functions the organization in question should be performing in the community, but in the subject's opinion was not. The subject vigorously pursued the topic for about one hour and upon reviewing the videotape only requested the removal of the early stages of the documentation where the subject was completely ineffective in communicating and was simply eliciting signs of anxiety. The documentation occurred in subject (a)'s home.

Subject (b)

Subject (b) agreed to the VTR documentation but remained highly anxious throughout the interview. The subject appeared to know very little about the organization in question and was unable to respond to the animator's information and questioning.

After ten to fifteen minutes of attempted discussion, the interview was stopped.

After reviewing the tape, the subject appeared unhappy with the document but, upon request, consented to its use if the worker considered it useful. The VTR documentaton occurred in the subject's home.

Subject (c)

Subject (c) was videotaped in the worker's home and the response was identical to that of subject (b). As in subject (b)'s case, subject (c) had very little information or knowledge about the organization in question and was unable to respond adequately to the worker's information and questions. The interview duration was approximately eight minutes and the subject agreed to the use of the entire document if the worker considered it useful.

Subject (d)

The interview was conducted in the subject's office of employment. The subject agreed to the documentation and actively responded with few signs of anxiety and little inhibition very soon after the process had commenced. The subject's present role and past experience provided a substantial information base for responding to the worker's questions. The documentation duration was approximately one hour, with the subject expressing intense feelings regarding his perception of the organization in question and what functions he thought the organization should be performing within the community.

After viewing the document, the subject granted permission for the worker to use any or all of the VTR document.

C.

After the subjects had been documented, the worker assumed responsibility for some editing, which resulted in a half-hour tape. At the meeting with the organization in question, the worker explained his role in the community and described the procedures used for preparing the VTR document (Section A), and screened the VTR document for the executive of the organization.

During the screening, the worker videotaped portions of the individuals' nonverbal reactions to the document and continued to videotape the group's verbal reactions after the screening. The group and individual reactions to the screening were intense and both positive and negative towards the content in the VTR document. It was apparent that the presence of the worker in the VTR documentation facilities during the screening and immediately after the screening did not prove inhibiting to the group's reaction to the screening.

D.

As a result of the group motivation generated during the group reaction to the self-appraisal VTR document, the group became concerned as to their real role in the community — particularly with respect to a specific sector of the community examined by subject (d) in the self-appraisal document.

The group decided to attempt to contact a specific individual representing this sector of concern, who had earlier expressed the same concern. It was hoped that the subject would consent to VTR documentation by the organization involved. The documentation was to express the subject's perspective of the area of concern and the subject's feelings as to how the organization could be of assistance.

However, when approached by the organization, the subject refused to have statements of concern expressed earlier documented on VTR. Hence, the process was abandoned.

Case 4

Subject (d) from Case 3 was approached by the animator for his permission to allow a group, whose activities he was responsible for, to utilize the VTR documentation facilities within the community. The subject was enthusiastic about the possibility of using VTR within the "intermediate" group under his responsibility and supervision, but was opposed to the suggestion that the intermediate group be allowed to take control of the VTR and use it actively in the greater community. Because of the subject's concern over the possibility of his receiving negative repercussions from some of the greater community, the subject attempted to modify the original proposal, in order that he could increase his control over the VTR process. The subject proposed that the VTR be confined simply to the intermediate group and that he control its use. Because the worker rejected the subject's modified proposal, the originally proposed process was completely abandoned.

Case 5

A.

The subject described in Case 4 (a teacher) proposed to document with VTR a group discussion on "secondary education in Saskatchewan." The group was to be comprised of the subject, a school trustee from the community, the community development worker, and four secondary school students. The resultant edited tape was to be screened for a university graduate class in educational administration. A fifth student operated the VTR during documentation and the subject made all editing decisions, which were later ratified by the group. The community development worker or animator merely assumed the responsibility for mechanical editing.

The group was at first obviously aware of the presence of VTR facilities and elicited signs of anxiety. Except for several comments directed at the VTR, the anxiety could well have been contributed to the presence of strangers in the group. After a few minutes, the group members began to discuss educational concerns important to them, signs of anxiety disappeared, and the VTR was ignored completely.

According to the subject, when the document

was screened for the graduate administration class, the class reacted very defensively and even accused the subject of editing the VTR document to provide information out of context.

B.

The school trustee was pleased with the VTR document and invited the subject to screen the document for the board of trustees. However, because of the subject's concern over the defensive reaction by the graduate class, the subject deliberately modified the proposal by suggesting that it first be shown to the senior educational administrators in the community and perhaps after the initial screening it could be shown to the trustees. Thus, it was decided to screen the tape for a group comprised of the administrators, the community development worker, the participant trustee in the original document, and the subject.

C.

The administrators acted extremely defensively to the VTR document and expressed some concern that the document was "biased against them" and their perspective was not expressed. The worker suggested that the tape be shown to a representative group of students, teachers, taxpayers, and educational administrators from the community and that their reaction be taped and included in the final document to be shown publicly.

The group of administrators attempted to abandon the original proposed process which involved a school board screening of the original tape, but finally settled for a modified process, which would result in a tape that would eventually be screened for the trustees; however, the administrators had modified the process in such a way as to increase their control over the process.

Before the modified proposal could be pursued, the subject, and thus the key actor, left the community to take up employment elsewhere and the process was completely abandoned.

Case 6

A senior administrator for the municipal government was contacted by the animator who proposed a process whereby the VTR activity would be focused around the administrator's employees and their clientele group. Initial contact between the subject (administrator) and the worker provoked an extremely defensive reaction from the subject. All attempts to develop a proposal with the subject which would involve the employees evaluating their effectiveness with their clientele, as well as their relationship with other community organizations concerned about the same clientele group, were not successful.

The subject remained defensive throughout the initial meeting and refused to participate in any of the proposals discussed at the meeting.

Case 7

A.

The agency had been contacted by the animator and the agency employees had mutually agreed with the animator to a proposal. The proposed proposal was that VTR be used to provide a self-appraisal mechanism for improving the employees' techniques for working with their clientele group. At the time of the agreement, the proposed process was limited to an internal self-appraisal situation and did not involve external self-appraisal. That is to say, the videotape was not to be shown to anyone other than the employee and his or her client involved in the specific situation.

B.

However, some time later, before the process was to commence, the process as proposed was abandoned. In its place, a modified process was substituted and the modified process involved only a limited portion of the agency.

The new and modified proposal, mutually agreed to, was to have the animator videotape two of the subjects working with their clientele. Later the two subjects were to review the document and it was to serve as a form of evaluation for the subjects to use for technique improvement. However, after the proposal had been accepted, it was decided by the agency to show the documents to the rest of the agency staff as a form of professional staff development. Thus a new dimension of external appraisal was introduced. In other words, the VTR would have the effect of taking the rest of the agency, including the supervisors, as observers into the subject-clientele session.

The process initially proceeded as proposed, but it soon became evident that the subjects had **intentionally modified** the process to "put on a show" for the VTR and hence the external evaluators.

Techniques used by the subjects were designed to keep the clientele busy discussing superficial and relatively meaningless topics. Thus, the pressure of responding spontaneously was removed from the subjects, and the probability of the discussion being intensively directed at the subjects was markedly reduced.

However, the original task or proposed process involved the facilitation (by the subjects) of in-depth personal communication within the clientele groups. This presupposes trust development within the group and between the group and the subjects. However, because of the proposal modification, trust development between the group and the subjects did not occur as it should have. Trust development would have involved encouraging subject spontaneity and perhaps subsequent pressure for subject self-disclosure and hence a high risk situation for the subjects since such spontaneity and disclosure were to be shared with external evaluators (agency staff and supervisors).

Case 8

A.

A community development seminar was videotaped by a group of students from the community. During the seminar, a core committee of representatives was elected to insure that the process initiated during the seminar was able to continue. One of the committee's immediate objectives was to edit the seminar videotapes to

produce a document useful for diffusing information throughout the larger community with regard to concerns expressed at the seminar. Hence, a subcommittee of two, from the core committee, assumed responsibility for editing the videotape.

B.

After making all of the editing decisions on paper, the two subjects responsible for editing prepared an edited audiotape to enable them to receive community feedback regarding their final product. The first individual to review the audiotape and hence the decisions made, was a close relative (subject X) of one of the subjects responsible for editing. Subject X reacted intensely to a specific section of the tape criticizing a certain sector of his community upon which subject X was dependent for his livelihood. Therefore, vested interest propelled subject X into attempting to deliberately modify the process and influence the editing decisions.

Even though some others in the community did not share the concern of subject X, that portion of the VTR document of concern to subject X was discarded. Thus, subject X intentionally modified the process to reduce personal risk.

Case 9

A group of young people, ages 11 to 13, were interested in producing a VTR document describing their immediate cultural environment and their relationship to it. Later they were to share their VTR document (along with others using different media) with friends and relatives. The proposed process included the offer of providing the subjects with instruction in the operation of the VTR facilities and to encourage them to take the VTR and produce their own document. The originally proposed process left the animator responsible only for offering technical assistance in terms of the mechanical aspect of the editing procedure.

The proposal was accepted as proposed and a document was produced by the subjects which in turn was screened for their friends and relatives in the community as originally proposed.

The VTR document included the subjects themselves displaying very little, if any, inhibition in front of the camera and it illustrated the subjects in their daily routine. During the community screening, the subjects displayed a great deal of pride and confidence in operating the VTR playback. The role of the community development worker was very "low key." The audience response to the screening was overwhelmingly positive and reinforcing for the subjects.

Case 10

A.

The subject contracted with the community development worker to produce a VTR document describing a specific sector of the community institution he represented. The document was then to be reviewed by a group of elected non-professional policy-makers for the institution, as a source of policy feedback.

It was agreed that the worker would do some of the camera work and the mechanical editing. However, the subject assumed responsibility for all editing decisions and for decisions as to what information was to be documented and how it was to be documented.

During the process, it was agreed that the subject would provide an introduction on VTR. The animator operated the camera and interviewed the subject. The subject was able to respond to the animator very effectively and with very little projected anxiety. Hence, the communication did not appear to be inhibited and the process appeared to proceed as mutually agreed upon by the worker and the subject.

B.

Before screening the VTR document for the policy-makers, the subject's supervisor requested a private screening after which the supervisor insisted that the subject's VTR introduction be altered before the final screening. Hence, the process was deliberately modified by an external agent (the supervisor) who perceived the process of screening the subject's introductory statements for the policy-makers as a risk too high for him to accept.

Case 11

A.

An information seminar, sponsored by the University Extension Division, was held in the community and the community development worker was present to document portions of the seminar on videotape.

During the latter stages of the seminar, the worker and a seminar participant proceeded to attempt to interview other participants as a form of seminar evaluation. The objective was to document their feelings with respect to the effectiveness of the seminar in meeting their needs and expectations.

Several individuals were interviewed separately and although they responded initially with varying degrees of anxiety, inevitably the anxiety quickly disappeared as they became immersed in the seminar content. As the questions of the interviewer drew them into the seminar content, the participants were able to coherently articulate their feelings with respect to the seminar content and its suitability for them as individuals.

B.

It was noted that one subject refused to be interviewed as an individual; however, a few minutes later a group was documented discussing the seminar effectiveness and that individual was a part of the group documented.

After several minutes of group discussion and VTR documentation, the subject began to ignore the VTR and proceeded to contribute extensively to the group discussion, both in terms of reinforcement and new insights.

Case 12

During a public demonstration of concern over a local issue, at which the community development

worker was present with VTR, the subject contracted with the worker for a process that involved VTR documentation of the subject's feelings of concern regarding the "demonstration" issue.

The animator at that time was uncertain how the information would be made available to the community and was unable to define who would see what portions of the VTR document to be produced. The issue involved intense feelings, with some degree of polarization between a minority group of "sympathizers" and the remainder of the community. However, the subject allowed the process to proceed as originally proposed and mutually agreed upon between the subject and the animator. Except for a few initial signs of anxiety, the subject coherently expressed intense feelings about the community issue. After documentation the subject immediately reviewed the document, approved the initial product, and approved the animator assuming the responsibility for future editing.

Case 13

The animator was contracted to document the local little theater practice prior to the public's review of the play. The purpose of the documentation was to provide feedback for the actors. The presence of the VTR equipment appeared to have very little effect on the participants.

Case 14

A.

When the community development worker attempted to arrange to document portions of a closed-door meeting between the "city hall" and influential actors external to the community, the proposed process was refused or at least modified in a very deliberate way. The modified proposed proposal involved a suggestion by the city hall people that the animator document information released at a common press conference, just as with any of the other news media.

B.

The press conference proved, as one might expect, to be a very routine activity for the city hall people and the presence of the animator and the VTR facilities were perceived as merely a part of the mass media — a fairly routine procedure for them. Hence, the presence of the VTR appeared to have very little effect on the participants.

Case 15

A.

The process was proposed that the subject, a middle-aged activist in a community issue involving the youth sector of the community, have his feelings and thoughts regarding the youth issue, documented via VTR (similar to Case 12).

Prior to the documentation and immediately after the documentation had commenced, the subject responded to the worker's questions in a relatively incoherent fashion and demonstrated signs of acute anxiety. After some persistence on the part of the animator, the signs of anxiety dissipated as the subject became more and more immersed in describing his involvement with the issue.

The community development worker was interviewing but was also accompanied by one of the leaders in the "youth issue," who operated the VTR camera.

B.

Prior to the interview, the subject had arranged to have a number of young associates who were concerned about the youth issue meet with him to participate in a discussion at the subject's residence. During the subject's interview, people were arriving and after the interview was completed, the "youth issue" leader attempted to stimulate some discussion among the youth while the community development worker operated the equipment.

The intended process was one of facilitating a group discussion of the community "youth issue" for VTR documentation. It soon became evident that the VTR was the center of attention. This was indicated by repeated comments and gestures directed at the VTR activity. Hence the proposed process was abandoned or at best it was modified by the subjects into a process of VTR exploration and demystification, rather than issue documentation.

Case 16

A.

A volunteer community action group, containing the resident community development worker, was organized to help the community deal with a local issue involving the development of community access to existing communications media. It was also organized to facilitate the evolution of a "cable" information system designed to meet the community's needs.

This process involved the gathering of information regarding both existing and future community communications media; the diffusion of such information to the general community; and the organization of the community to deal with specific communications issues affecting the community.

Part of the "information gathering" process involved the establishment of a series of community information meetings with cable license applicants competing for a license to "cable" the community in question. In the early stages, it soon became evident that the applicants were confident and projecting a "super salesman" image. On the other hand, although the community "core" group was becoming better equipped with information and more confident, the community was in various stages of naivety relative to the cable company representatives.

Therefore, during the public meetings with the subjects (cable company representatives applying for licenses), VTR was used by the community group to document the entire session for each meeting. The subjects were not given the option of participating in the editing process. However, they were provided with the rationale for the VTR documentation of the public meetings. This rationale, provided by the community development

worker and the rest of the community group, was that the documented information would be:

(1) usefully shared with the rest of the community;

(2) usefully shared with the communications policy-makers;

(3) usefully stored for later recall.

The animator assumed responsibility for assuring that the rationale for the VTR documentation was indeed communicated to the subjects (cable applicants) at each meeting.

In each of the three meetings, the subjects were acutely aware of the presence of VTR and made frequent references to it. In two of the three meetings, the subjects also exhibited marked signs of anxiety and nervousness. On the other hand, the community group appeared to gain some confidence and did not demonstrate an abundance of anxiety. If the group demonstrated anything, it was a surprising degree of subject-directed aggressiveness which had been noticeably missing from earlier community meetings when the subjects and VTR were absent. Thus the situation was mildly polarized — the community vs. the subjects — with VTR on the community's side.

B.

After an initial series of public meetings with the cable companies, the community core group had isolated a series of issues they felt had to be resolved to the community's satisfaction before a cable license was granted for the community. Therefore, a public forum was organized to:

(1) again confront license applicants with the immediate and most pressing communication issues;

(2) facilitate dialogue between the community and the communication policy-makers;

(3) sensitize provincial policy-makers to the current communication concerns;

(4) further diffuse information to the immediate community.

Very early in the public forum planning process, the core group made plans to request funds from the federal government to finance the forum. Concern by the group over their perceived inability to express the community concerns adequately in the appropriate application form supplied by the federal government, resulted in a VTR document being produced.

The document was produced by four representatives of the core group along with the community development worker operating the camera. Their documented conversation was spontaneous and directed at each other, but in such a way as to paint a picture of the community and its communications concerns as they should be communicated to the appropriate funding agency.

Initially the group were highly anxious and aware of the VTR. Several times the subjects would stop in the middle of a tense statement and ask that the VTR be turned off for a moment to relieve the tension and to allow the statement to be repeated. However, the animator did not stop the VTR and simply reassured the subjects by reminding them that they would be able to edit out such statements if they wished.

After approximately eight minutes, the group had evolved to a point where they completely ignored the VTR and were more concerned about expressing to each other the communication issues they had isolated and discussed for so many months.

Hence a transition occurred within a few minutes from a state of relative incoherence and anxiety to a state of content immersion (vis-à-vis the communication issues) and a high level of intra-group communication.

Case 17

The subjects were approached by the animator with the proposal that they assume a documentation role with the VTR facilities and produce a VTR profile of their community. The animator's expectations were that such a production would facilitate community self-appraisal, and a re-examination of what their community really was and what was happening to it. It was also anticipated that the VTR document produced would be screened at a gathering of their community along with other surrounding communities with similar problems.

The subjects were provided with both documentation and editing facilities and except for the assumed expectations surrounding the VTR facilities, the subjects had complete control of the VTR facilities and indeed, the process itself. As the process proceeded, it was carefully observed and monitored by the animator — particularly with respect to the subjects' degree of satisfaction with the process as it was proceeding and their motivation to continue with the process.

After the process was proposed and accepted, the degree of satisfaction and motivation immediately rose to a very high level as the subjects explored the VTR medium itself in low risk situations. However, as the subjects identified portions of their community for documentation, and the actual community documentation commenced, the satisfaction level began to drop and reached its lowest level about halfway through the documentation process, at which point it began to rise again.

The second peak was reached just prior to the editing process and the subjects expressed feelings of accomplishment; however, the long editing process, in particular the logging process, proved extremely costly in subject time and energy and the degree of satisfaction dropped to its lowest level just after the decision-making process had commenced.

The level of satisfaction then appeared to rise, at first slowly and then rapidly as the final product was completed and screened for the community. Continuous screenings and repeated positive feedback further motivated the subjects to the point that the subjects agreed to a second related process that was proposed, which was to involve their participation and VTR documentation of the larger

gathering of neighboring communities. However, during the regional meeting, an attempt by the subjects to participate in the decision-making and information sharing resulted in some negative feedback and social "put downs," causing the subjects to withdraw from the process. The process monitoring ceased as the subjects' satisfaction level was again lowered due to negative process feedback.

Although the negative feedback was not attached directly to the VTR production, it was directed at the subjects' involvement in the process and since the original VTR documentation legitimized their presence, the negative feedback affected the subjects' feelings about their involvement in the total process — including the VTR process.

APPENDIX B

Case Summary

Case	Risk Judgment	Subject Involved	Process Decision (Observed)	Risk Level			Reference Level		
				C	OV	VPL	Inf. Imm.	Iss. Str.	R.
1	Unacceptable	Subject	Modified unintentionally	L	L	H	L	H	L
2	Unacceptable	Subject	Abandoned (Mod. int.)	L	L	H	L	H	L
3 B(a)	Unacceptable	Subject	Transition	L	H	L	L	H	L
3 B(b)	Unacceptable	Subject	Modified unintentionally	L	H	L	L	L	L
3 B(c)	Unacceptable	Subject	Modified unintentionally	L	H	L	L	L	L
3 B(d)	Acceptable	Subject	Accepted	L	H	L	L	H	L
3 C	Acceptable	Group	Accepted	L	H	L	H	L	L
3 D	Unacceptable	Subject	Abandoned	L	L	H	L	L*	L
4	Unacceptable	Subject (d)	Abandoned (Mod. int.)	L	L	H	L	L	L
5 A	Unacceptable	Group	Transition	L	H	L	L	H	L
5 B	Unacceptable	Teacher	Modified intentionally	H	/	H	L	H	L
5 C	Unacceptable	Administrators	Modified intentionally	L	H	H	H	H	L
6	Unacceptable	Subject	Abandoned	H	L	H	L	L	L

**Moderate activity*

Case	Risk Judgment	Subject Involved	Process Decision (Observed)	Risk Level			Reference Level		
				C	OV	VPL	Inf. Imm.	Iss. Str.	R.
7 A	Unacceptable	All employees	Abandoned (Mod. int.)	L	L	H	L	L	L
7 B	Unacceptable	Two employees	Modified intentionally	H	/	H	L	L	L
8B	Unacceptable	Subject X	Modified intentionally	L	H	H	H	L	L
9	Acceptable	Group	Accepted	H	/	L	L	L	L
10 A	Acceptable	Subject	Accepted	H	/	L	L	L*	L
10 B	Unacceptable	Supervisor	Modified intentionally	L	H	H	H	L	L
11 A	Acceptable	Individuals	Accepted	L	L	H	H	L	L
11 B	Unacceptable	Subject alone	Abandoned	L	L	H	H	L	L
11 C	Acceptable	Subject with group	Accepted	L	L	H	L*	H	L
12	Acceptable	Subject	Accepted	L	H	L	L	L	H
13	Acceptable	Group	Accepted	L	L	H	L	L	L
14 A	Unacceptable	Subject	Modified intentionally	L	H	L	L	L	H
14 B	Acceptable	Group	Accepted	L	L	H	L*	H	L
15 A	Unacceptable	Subject	Transition	L	L	H	L	H	L
15B	Unacceptable	Group	Abandoned (Mod. int.)	L	H	L	L	H	H
16B	Unacceptable	Group	Transition	H	/	L	L	L*	L
17	Acceptable	Group	Accepted						

Moderate activity

APPENDIX C

HYPOTHESES PROPOSED

1. The risk level and the reference level are elevated or depressed independently of each other.

2. (a) If a proposed process is abandoned, it is due to a high risk judgment;

   (b) if a proposed process is modified intentionally or unintentionally, it is due to a high risk judgment;

   (c) if a proposed process changes within a given situation from an unintentionally modified process to the process as originally proposed, it is due to a reduction of risk judgment;

   (d) if a proposed process is accepted as proposed, it is due to a low risk judgment.

3. (a) Control is inversely proportional to the risk level;

   (b) the value of potential loss (VPL) is directly proportional to the risk level;

   (c) outcome visibility **does not** directly affect risk level;

   (d) when outcome visibility is low, the value of potential loss is always high;

   (e) control is inversely proportional to the subject's consideration of outcome visibility.

4. (a) The degree of information immediacy involved in the proposed process is directly proportional to the reference level;

   (b) the strength of the issue involved in the proposed process is directly proportional to the reference level;

   (c) the degree of routineness involved in the proposed process is directly proportional to the reference level;

   (d) (i) in any given situation there is a minimum threshold time of subject exposure to VTR documentation before content immersion can take place;

   (ii) the duration of subject exposure to the VTR documentation process (within a given situation) is directly proportional to the probability that reference elevation will occur.

   (e) the probability that a VTR documentation process **will proceed as proposed** (as a result of reference elevation due to content immersion) is greater in a situation where **two or more individuals** are involved than it is in situations where single individuals are being documented.

5. (a) The degree of VTR mystification or process immersion is **directly proportional** to the reference level;

   (b) when influenced by the VTR process immersion factor, the reference level **reaches a maximum elevation** and as the VTR mystique disappears, the reference level becomes **depressed**;

   (c) the tendency for the reference level to be depressed continues until the VTR process immersion factor is **reduced to a state of inactivity.**

6. (a) VTR documentation can exert a force with both directional specificity and magnitude;

   (b) the VTR force may either facilitate communication (due to low risk judgment) or inhibit communication (due to high risk judgment);

   (c) the direction of the force exerted is dependent upon the role of the VTR documentation process as perceived by the subjects within the situation;

   (d) the role of the VTR documentation process as perceived by the subjects within a given situation can be affected by individuals within the situation (e.g., animators);

   (e) the more diffused the direction of the force as a result of greater numbers documented, the **less** the magnitude applied to any single individual; hence, the lower the risk judgment and the less the communication inhibition.